ESSAYS

Every Child Should Know

Edited by

HAMILTON WRIGHT MABIE

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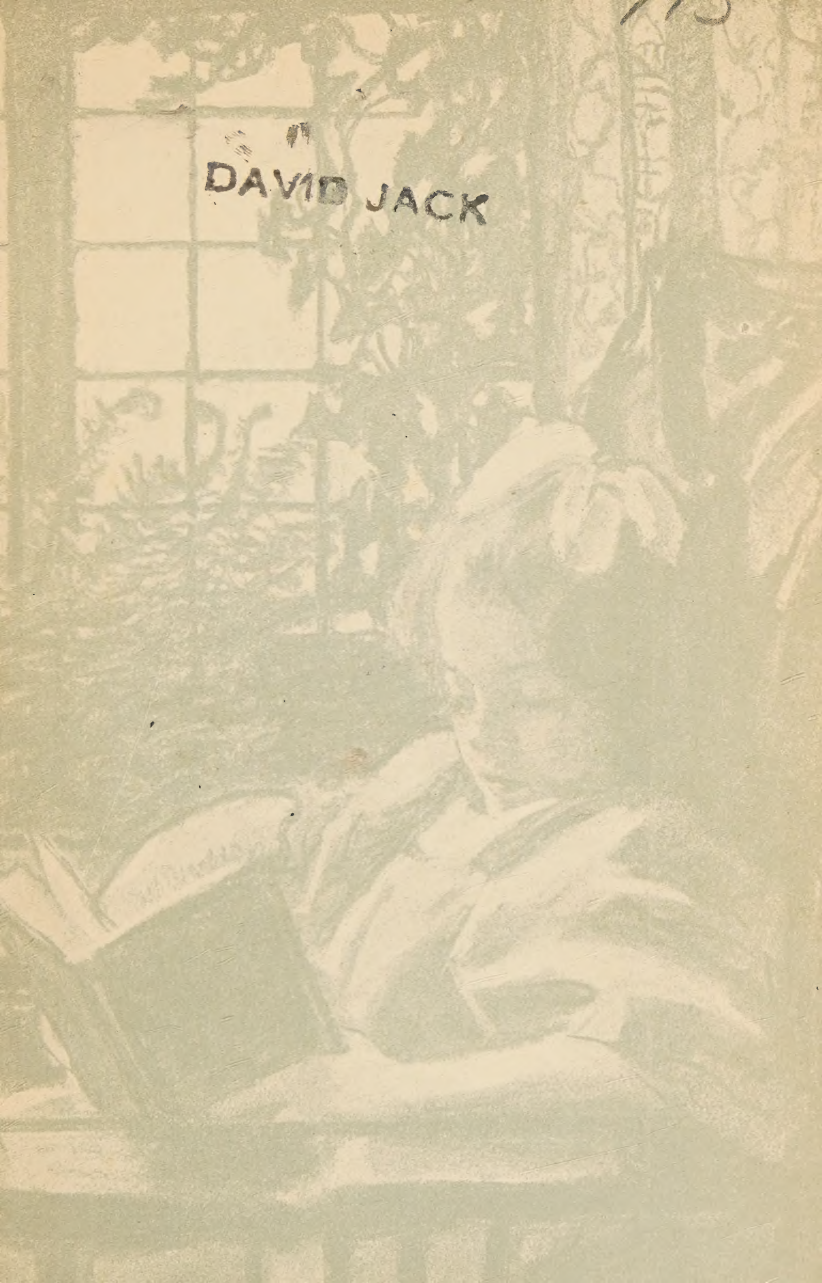
DAVID JACK

Essays Every Child Should Know

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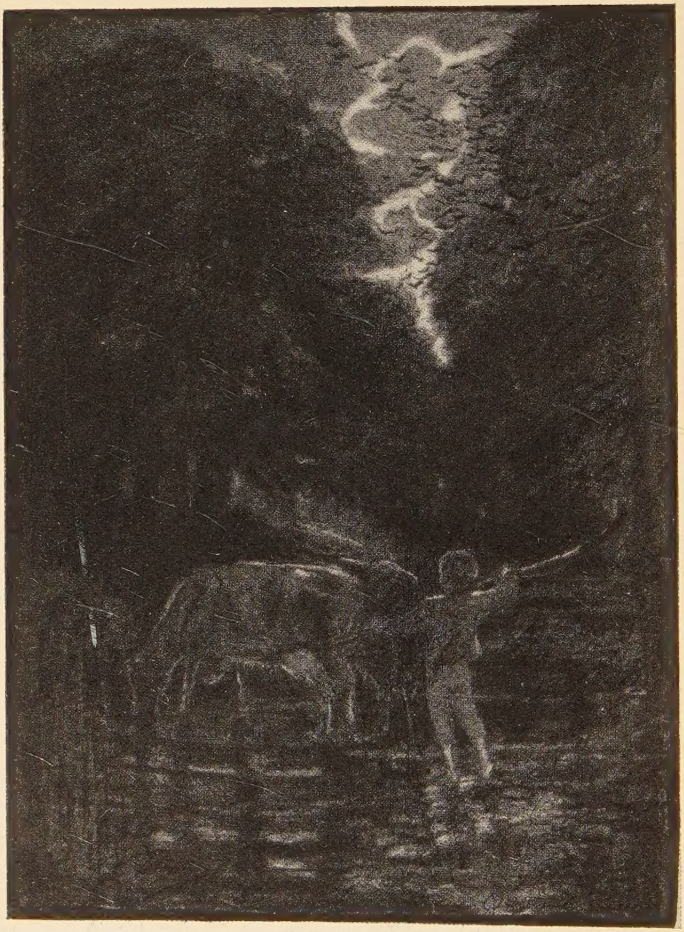

ESSAYS THAT EVERY CHILD SHOULD KNOW

A SELECTION OF THE WRITINGS OF ENGLISH AND AMERICAN ESSAYISTS

EDITED BY

HAMILTON WRIGHT MABIE

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INTRODUCTION

One of the most familiar passages in dramatic literature describes the seven ages of man as they appeared to the author of "As You Like It": the infant in his nurse's arms; the whining schoolboy, with "shining morning face," creeping to school; the lover, "sighing like a furnace"; the soldier, "bearded like the pard"; the justice, "full of wise saws"; "the lean and slippered pantaloon." This is a highly imaginative rendering of the facts of life. Nobody escapes the dangers of infancy; the fortunate become schoolboys and, later, lovers; but comparatively few men turn soldiers, though every true man has some soldierly qualities; still fewer wear the robes of the judge, though every man ought to have something of his wisdom; and the number of helpless old people becomes smaller and smaller.

In Shakespeare's time a man was considered old at forty; now-a-days many men and women are alive and at work at eighty. People have fallen into the habit of talking about "the good old times" when everybody lived to a great age; as a matter of fact, however, there is no doubt that the hardships of travel, absence of comforts, ignorance of the laws of health, bad air, bad food, bad drainage, lack of heat in cold and inclement seasons, indifference to sunlight and to the presence of filth, crude methods of surgery and small knowledge of medicine, in the good old days killed people by the thousands who under present conditions would live and prosper in mind and body to a vigorous old age. Men

still grow old, but they live longer than their forefathers because they have found out how to live by long and painful experience.

Not only have they discovered the way of life, the path along which all men must travel, but they have learned many things about the world through which this way runs like one of those great Roman roads which the generations have trodden for two thousand years. They have tried all manner of experiments as they journeyed; they have studied one another in all kinds of experience; they have made excursions in every direction and learned many things which cannot be seen from the main highway; they have set their minds and hands at all kinds of work and play; they have made a host of beautiful or ugly objects out of the wood, stone, clay, marble and other materials they found about them; they have built houses for shelter and homes for the things they loved or the gods they worshipped; they have searched the ground, the sea and the air and discovered all manner of wonderful secrets about themselves and the world through which they are travelling. They still pass through the seven ages which Jacques described; they are born helpless infants, they go through boyhood, manhood and old age, and they die; but the great family to which they belong does not die; the young crowd in through the gate of birth as the old go out through the gate of death.

This great family, which we call the race, has also had its different ages: its infancy, its childhood, its youth, its maturity; but its old age has not come. Sometimes it seems to be losing strength and energy; and then, slowly or suddenly, it has grown young again and filled the earth with the sound of its building and the noise of its action.

It has a memory which we call history, and it can recall at will all that it has passed through or found out in its long march. It remembers what happened to it in childhood, and what it thought of the wonderful place in which it played and went to school; just as a man remembers his adventures as a boy and his thoughts about things; his fear of going into the woods alone at night because of the strange beings who might be hidden there; his belief that there were all kinds of magical goings-on in the heart of the woods if one could but hear what was said and see what was being done without being seen himself.

Every age through which men have passed on their way, as a race, from childhood to manhood, has had its own thoughts about things and its own explanations of its mysterious life and of the mysterious world about it; so that the story of the childhood, boyhood, youth and manhood of humanity can be read in the books each period has made for itself. As imaginative children tell one another stories in which real things are confused with imaginary ones, and the actual world peopled with creatures of fancy, and thunder, lightning, wind, storm and sea spoken of as if there were good or evil creatures behind them, so men in the childhood of their knowledge and mental growth told stories about the strange world in which they lived, and explained its forces and movements by regarding them as under the control of imaginary beings like themselves, only possessed of greater power. Thus the myths, which were poetic rather than scientific explanations of Nature, came into existence in great numbers and marked the beginning of literature. A little later, while they were still seeing the world through the imagination rather than with trained eyes,

men created the fairy stories in which they softened the hard facts of life by letting fancy play about them; making wicked giants to work mischief and good genii and kindly fairies to aid people who were in trouble, restore to their natural forms children who had been transformed, by enchantment, into birds or beasts. Still later, when men had passed out of childhood into youth, they made the legends which deal freely and poetically with persons, real or imaginary, or with historical incidents which they embellished with miraculous adventures, and which are told as simply as if they were describing everyday occurrences.

All these forms of literature belong to the childhood or youth of the race, while it was still largely ignorant of its surroundings and much more given to looking at things through the imagination than to observing them carefully; and before its adventures and experiences had become so many and so various that they pressed upon the mind for explanation more insistently than the world without. The essay came into existence when men began to know themselves somewhat, and were eager to know more; when the life within had become more engrossing and fascinating than the life without. The essay was, therefore, one of the products of the period of manhood or maturity; it marked the age of reflection on the happenings of life; and was the endeavour, by meditation on those happenings, to understand what they meant. No sooner had men begun to think about themselves and their experiences than they became aware that a great new field had opened before them; for whatever had to do with human nature was material for thought and immensely interesting. Sad things and gay things; the tragedy of life and the merry humour of

it; its greatness and its littleness; the endless variety and range of its experiences; its oddities, eccentricities, inconsistencies: all these things caught the eye of the essayist and gave him inexhaustible material for reflection. He could meditate on old age or friendship as did Cicero, or on morals as did Plutarch, two of the earliest essayists; on all kinds of men and the things that happened to them, as did Montaigne, the earliest and one of the foremost of the modern essayists; on death and empire and ambition and noble station as did Bacon, whose style and manner have the dignity of the subjects they discuss. He could describe manners and social customs with the charm of mingled seriousness and humour, as did Addison; he could draw portraits of historical persons as did Macaulay, or etch wonderful character studies as did Carlyle, or let a quaint humour play around familiar things and people, or things of great moment and people of great oddity, as did Lamb; he could describe with happy phrase historic places or old habits of life as did Irving; or give familiar scenes and places strange and mysterious setting of suggestion as did Hawthorne.

The essayists belong to the reflective, meditative period of life; they are often shrewd observers, with a keen eye for everything which shows character and an immense curiosity in everything which reveals the ways of men; but there is always an element of reflection in their work; a selection and arrangement of materials which embody the results of thought. Human experience is the material with which they deal, and they do not appear until men have lived long enough to accumulate the results of experience. To the understanding and expression of this experience they bring original minds and individual quality of feeling or of style; for the two prime factors

in the essay as a form of literature are abundance of human experience and the mind or temperament or artistic energy and grace of a writer of genuine individuality.

In this selection of essays, made for young readers who have begun to be interested not only in the spectacle of life but in its meaning, the endeavour has been to avoid abstract discussions and critical or philosophical meditations, and to present examples of the more vital, pictorial and humorous work in this rich field.

—Hamilton W. Mabie.

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Essays Every Child Should Know

ESSAYS EVERY CHILD SHOULD KNOW

I

THE COVERLY SABBATH,
Monday, July 9, 1711

I AM always very well pleased with a country Sunday, and think, if keeping holy the seventh day were only a human institution, it would be the best method that could have been thought of for the polishing and civilising of mankind. It is certain the country people would soon degenerate into a kind of savages and barbarians, were there not such frequent returns of a stated time, in which the whole village meet together with their best faces, and in their cleanliest habits, to converse with one another upon indifferent subjects, hear their duties explained to them, and join together in adoration of the Supreme Being. Sunday clears away the rust of the whole week, not only as it refreshes in their minds the notions of religion, but as it puts both the sexes upon appearing in their most agreeable forms, and exerting all such qualities as are apt to give them a figure in the eye of the village. A country fellow distinguishes himself as much in the churchyard, as a citizen does upon the Change, the whole parish-politics being generally discussed in that place either after sermon or before the bells ring.

My friend Sir Roger being a good churchman, has beautified the inside of his church with several texts of his own choosing. He has likewise given a handsome pulpit-cloth, and railed in the communion-table at his own expense. He has often told me, that at his coming to his estate he found his parishioners very irregular; and that in order to make them kneel and join in the responses, he gave every one of them a hassock and a common-prayer-book: and at the same time employed an itinerant singing-master, who goes about the country for that purpose, to instruct them rightly in the tunes of the Psalms; upon which they now very much value themselves, and indeed outdo most of the country churches that I have ever heard.

As Sir Roger is landlord to the whole congregation, he keeps them in very good order, and will suffer nobody to sleep in it besides himself; for if by chance he has been surprised into a short nap at sermon, upon recovering out of it he stands up and looks about him, and if he sees anybody else nodding, either wakes them himself, or sends his servant to them. Several other of the old knight's particularities break out upon these occasions. Sometimes he will be lengthening out a verse in the singing Psalms, half a minute after the rest of the congregation have done with it; sometimes when he is pleased with the matter of his devotion, he pronounces "Amen," three or four times to the same prayer; and sometimes stands up when everybody else is upon their knees, to count the congregation, or see if any of his tenants are missing.

I was yesterday very much surprised to hear my old friend, in the midst of the service, calling out to one John Matthews to mind what he was about, and not disturb

the congregation. This John Matthews it seems is remarkable for being an idle fellow, and at that time was kicking his heels for his diversion. This authority of the knight, though exerted in that odd manner which accompanies him in all circumstances of life, has a very good effect upon the parish, who are not polite enough to see anything ridiculous in his behaviour; besides that the general good sense and worthiness of his character make his friends observe these little singularities as foils that rather set off than blemish his good qualities.

As soon as the sermon is finished, nobody presumes to stir till Sir Roger is gone out of the church. The knight walks down from his seat in the chancel between a double row of his tenants, that stand bowing to him on each side: and every now and then inquires how such a one's wife, or mother, or son, or father do, whom he does not see at church; which is understood as a secret reprimand to the person that is absent.

The chaplain has often told me, that upon a catechising day, when Sir Roger has been pleased with a boy that answers well, he has ordered a Bible to be given him next day for his encouragement; and sometimes accompanies it with a flitch of bacon to his mother. Sir Roger has likewise added five pounds a year to the clerk's place; and that he may encourage the young fellows to make themselves perfect in the church-service has promised upon the death of the present incumbent, who is very old, to bestow it according to merit.

The fair understanding between Sir Roger and his chaplain, and their mutual concurrence in doing good, is the more remarkable, because the very next village is famous for the differences and contentions that rise between the parson and the 'squire, who live in a

perpetual state of war. The parson is always preaching at the 'squire; and the 'squire, to be revenged on the parson, never comes to church. The 'squire has made all his tenants atheists and tithe-stealers; while the parson instructs them every Sunday in the dignity of his order, and insinuates to them, in almost every sermon, that he is a better man than his patron. In short matters have come to such an extremity, that the 'squire has not said his prayers either in public or private this half year; and that the parson threatens him, if he does not mend his manners, to pray for him in the face of the whole congregation.

Feuds of this nature, though too frequent in the country, are very fatal to the ordinary people; who are so used to be dazzled with riches, that they pay as much deference to the understanding of a man of an estate, as of a man of learning; and are very hardly brought to regard any truth, how important soever it may be, that is preached to them, when they know there are several men of five hundred a year who do not believe it.

—Joseph Addison.

II

A DAY'S RAMBLE IN LONDON

IT IS an inexpressible pleasure to know a little of the world, and be of no character or significancy in it.

To be ever unconcerned, and ever looking on new objects with an endless curiosity, is a delight known only to those who are turned for speculation: nay, they who enjoy it, must value things only as they are the objects of speculation, without drawing any worldly advantage to themselves from them, but just as they are what contribute to their amusements, or the improvement of the mind. I lay one night last week at Richmond; and being restless, not out of dissatisfaction, but a certain busy inclination one sometimes has, I rose at four in the morning, and took boat for London, with a resolution to rove by boat and coach for the next four and twenty hours, until the many different objects I must needs meet with should tire my imagination, and give me an inclination to a repose more profound than I was at that time capable of. I beg people's pardon for an odd humour I am guilty of, and was often that day, which is saluting any person whom I like, whether I know him or not. This is a particularity which would be tolerated in me, if they considered that the greatest pleasure I know I receive at my eyes, and that I am obliged to an agreeable person for coming abroad into my view, as another is for a visit of conversation at their own houses.

The hours of the day and night are taken up in the cities of London and Westminster, by people as different from each other as those who are born in different centuries. Men of six o'clock give way to those of nine, they of nine to the generation of twelve, and they of twelve disappear, and make room for the fashionable world who have made two o'clock the noon of the day.

When we first put off from shore, we soon fell in with a fleet of gardeners bound for the several marketports of London; and it was the most pleasing scene imaginable to see the cheerfulness with which those industrious people plied their way to a certain sale of their goods. The banks on each side are as well peopled, and beautified with as agreeable plantations as any spot on the earth; but the Thames itself, loaded with the product of each shore, added very much to the landscape. It was very easy to observe by their sailing, and the countenances of the ruddy virgins, who were supercargoes, the parts of the town to which they were bound. There was an air in the purveyors for Covent Garden, who frequently converse with morning rakes, very unlike the seemly sobriety of those bound for Stocks Market.

Nothing remarkable happened in our voyage; but I landed with ten sail of apricot boats at Strand Bridge, after having put in at Nine-Elms, and taken in melons, consigned by Mr. Cuffee of that place, to Sarah Sewell and company, at their stall in Covent Garden. We arrived at Strand Bridge at six of the clock, and were unloading, when the hackney-coachmen of the foregoing night took their leave of each other at the Dark-house, to go to bed before the day was too far spent. Chimney-sweepers passed by us as we made up to the market, and some raillery happened between one of the fruit

wenches and those black men, about the Devil and Eve, with allusion to their several professions. I could not believe any place more entertaining than Covent Garden; where I strolled from one fruit shop to another, with crowds of agreeable young women around me, who were purchasing fruit for their respective families. It was almost eight of the clock before I could leave that variety of objects. I took coach and followed a young lady, who tripped into another just before me, attended by her maid. I saw immediately she was of the family of the Vain-loves. There are a set of these who of all things affect the play of Blindman's-buff, and leading men into love for they know not whom, who are fled they know not where. This sort of woman is usually a jaunty slattern; she hangs on her clothes, plays her head, varies her posture, and changes place incessantly; and all with an appearance of striving at the same time to hide herself, and yet give you to understand she is in humour to laugh at you. You must have often seen the coachmen make signs with their fingers as they drive by each other, to intimate how much they have got that day. They can carry on that language to give intelligence where they are driving. In an instant my coachman took the wink to pursue, and the lady's driver gave the hint that he was going through Long-Acre, toward St. James's. While he whipped up James Street, we drove for King Street, to save the pass at St. Martin's Lane. The coachmen took care to meet, jostle, and threaten each other for way, and be entangled at the end of Newport Street and Long Acre. The fright, you must believe, brought down the lady's coach-door, and obliged her with her mask off, to enquire into the bustle, when she sees the man she would avoid. The

tackle of the coach-window is so bad she cannot draw it up again, and she drives up sometimes wholly discovered, and sometimes half escaped, according to the accident of carriages in her way. One of these ladies keeps her seat in a hackney-coach, as well as the best rider does on a managed horse. The laced shoe of her left foot, with a careless gesture, just appearing on the opposite cushion, held her both firm, and in a proper attitude to receive the next jolt.

As she was an excellent coach-woman, many were the glances at each other which we had for an hour and a half, in all parts of the town, by the skill of our drivers; until at last my lady was conveniently lost with notice from her coachman to ours to make off, and he should hear where she went. This chase was now at an end, and the fellow who drove her came to us, and discovered that he was ordered to come again in an hour, for that she was a Silk-worm. I was surprised with this phrase, but found it was cant among the hackney fraternity for their best customers, women who ramble twice or thrice a week from shop to shop, to turn over all the goods in town without buying anything. The Silk-worms are, it seems, indulged by the tradesmen; for though they never buy, they are ever talking of new silks, laces and ribbons, and serve the owners, in getting them customers as their common dunners do in making them pay.

The day of people of fashion began now to break, and carts and hacks were mingled with equipages of show and vanity; when I resolved to walk it out of cheapness; but my unhappy curiosity is such, that I find it always my interest to take coach, for some odd adventure among beggars, ballad-singers, or the like, detains and throws me into expense. It happened so immediately; for

at the corner of Warwick Street, as I was listening to a new ballad, a ragged rascal, a beggar who knew me, came up to me, and began to turn the eyes of the good company upon me, by telling me he was extremely poor, and should die in the street for want of drink, except I immediately would have the charity to give him sixpence to go into the next alehouse and save his life. He urged, with a melancholy face, that all of his family had died of thirst. All the mob have humour, and two or three began to take up the jest; by which Mr. Sturdy carried his point, and let me sneak off to a coach. As I drove along, it was a pleasing reflection to see the world so prettily checkered since I left Richmond, and the scene still filling with children of a new hour. This satisfaction increased as I moved toward the city, and gay signs, well disposed streets, magnificent public structures, and wealthy shops, adorned with contented faces, made the joy still rising till we came into the centre of the city and centre of the world of trade, the Exchange of London. As other men in the crowds about me were pleased with their hopes and bargains, I found my account in observing them, in attention to their several interests. I, indeed, looked upon myself as the richest man that walked the Exchange that day; for my benevolence made me share the gains of every bargain that was made. It was not the least of my satisfactions in my survey, to go upstairs, and pass the shops of agreeable females; to observe so many pretty hands busy in the folding of ribbons, and the utmost eagerness of agreeable faces in the sale of patches, pins, and wires, on each side the counters, was an amusement in which I should longer have indulged myself, had not the dear creatures called to me to ask what I wanted, when I could not answer,

only "To look at you." I went to one of the windows which opened to the area below, where all the several voices lost their distinction, and rose up in a confused humming, which created in me a reflection that could not come into the mind of any but of one a little too studious; for I said to myself, with a kind of pun in thought —"What nonsense is all the hurry of this world to those who are above it?" In these, or not much wiser thoughts, I had like to have lost my place at the chop-house, where every man, according to the natural bashfulness or sullenness of our nation, eats in a public room a mess of broth, or chop of meat, in dumb silence, as if they had no pretence to speak to each other on the foot of being men, except they were of each other's acquaintance.

I went afterward to Robin's and saw people who had dined with me at the fivepenny ordinary just before, give bills for the value of large estates; and could not but behold with great pleasure, property lodged in, and transferred in a moment from such as would never be masters of half as much as is seemingly in them, and given from them every day they live. But before five in the afternoon I left the city, came to my common scene of Covent Garden, and passed the evening at Will's, in attending the discourses of several sets of people, who relieved each other within my hearing on the subject of cards, dice, love, learning, and politics. The last subject kept me until I heard the streets in the possession of the bellman, who had now the world to himself, and cried—"Past two of the clock." This roused me from my seat, and I went to my lodging, led by a light, whom I put into the discourse of his private economy, and made him give me an account of the charge,

hazard, profit, and loss of a family that depended upon a link, with a design to end my trivial day with the generosity of a sixpence, instead of a third part of that sum. When I came to my chambers I writ down these minutes; but was at a loss what instruction I should propose to my reader from the enumeration of so many insignificant matters and occurrences; and I thought it of great use, if they could learn with me to keep their minds open to gratification, and ready to receive it from anything it meets with. This one circumstance will make every face you see give you the satisfaction you now take in beholding that of a friend; will make every object a pleasing one; will make all the good which arrives to any man, an increase of happiness to yourself.

—Richard Steele.

III

A DISSERTATION UPON ROAST PIG

MANKIND, says a Chinese manuscript, which my friend M—— was obliging enough to read and explain to me, for the first seventy thousand ages ate their meat raw, clawing or biting it from the living animal, just as they do in Abyssinia to this day. This period is not obscurely hinted at by their great Confucius in the second chapter of his Mundane Mutations, where he designates a kind of golden age by the term Cho-fang, literally the Cook's Holiday. The manuscript goes on to say, that the art of roasting, or rather broiling (which I take to be the elder brother) was accidentally discovered in the manner following. The swine-herd Ho-ti, having gone out into the woods one morning, as his manner was, to collect mast for his hogs, left his cottage in the care of his eldest son, Bo-bo, a great lubberly boy, who being fond of playing with fire, as younkers of his age commonly are, let some sparks escape into a bundle of straw, which kindling quickly, spread the conflagration over every part of their poor mansion, till it was reduced to ashes. Together with the cottage (a sorry antediluvian make-shift of a building, you may think it), what was of much more importance, a fine litter of new-farrowed pigs, no less than nine in number perished. China pigs have been esteemed a luxury all over the East, from the remotest periods that we read of. Bo-bo was in the utmost consternation, as you may

think, not so much for the sake of the tenement, which his father and he could easily build up again with a few dry branches, and the labour of an hour or two at any time, as for the loss of the pigs. While he was thinking what he should say to his father, and wringing his hands over the smoking remnants of one of those untimely sufferers, an odour assailed his nostrils, unlike any scent which he had before experienced. What could it proceed from? Not from the burnt cottage: he had smelt that smell before; indeed this was by no means the first accident of the kind which had occurred through the negligence of this unlucky young fire-brand. Much less did it resemble that of any known herb, weed, or flower. A premonitory moistening at the same time overflowed his nether lip. He knew not what to think. He next stooped down to feel the pig, if there were any signs of life in it. He burnt his fingers, and to cool them he applied them in his booby fashion to his mouth. Some of the crumbs of the scorched skin had come away with his fingers, and for the first time in this life (in the world's life indeed, for before him no man had known it), he tasted *crackling!* Again he felt and fumbled at the pig. It did not burn him so much now, still he licked his fingers from a sort of habit. The truth at length broke into his slow understanding, that it was the pig that smelt so, and the pig that tasted so delicious; and surrendering himself up to the new-born pleasure, he fell to tearing up whole handfuls of the scorched skin with the flesh next it, and was cramming it down his throat in his beastly fashion, when his sire entered amid the smoking rafters, armed with retributory cudgel, and finding how affairs stood, began to rain blows upon the young rogue's shoulders as thick as hail-stones, which

Bo-bo heeded not any more than if they had been flies. The tickling pleasure which he experienced in his lower regions had rendered him quite callous to any inconveniences he might feel in those remote quarters. His father might lay on, but he could not beat him from his pig, till he had fairly made an end of it, when, becoming a little more sensible of his situation, something like the following dialogue ensued:

"You graceless whelp, what have you got there devouring? Is it not enough that you have burnt me down three houses with your dog's tricks, and be hanged to you! but you must be eating fire, and I know not what. What have you got there, I say?"

"O father, the pig, the pig! do come and taste how nice the burnt pig eats."

The ears of Ho-ti tingled with horror. He cursed his son, and he cursed himself that ever he should beget a son that should eat burnt pig.

Bo-bo, whose scent was wonderfully sharpened since morning, soon raked out another pig, and fairly rending it asunder, thrust the lesser half by main force into the fists of Ho-ti, still shouting out, "Eat, eat, eat, the burnt pig, father, only taste—O Lord!"—with such-like barbarous ejaculations, cramming all the while as if he would choke.

Ho-ti trembled in every joint while he grasped the abominable thing, wavering whether he should not put his son to death for an unnatural young monster, when the crackling scorching his fingers, as it had done his son's, and applying the same remedy to them, he in his turn tasted some of its flavour, which, make what sour mouths he would for a pretence, proved not altogether displeasing to him. In conclusion (for the manuscript here is

a little tedious,) both father and son fairly sat down to the mess, and never left off till they had despatched all that remained of the litter.

Bo-bo was strictly enjoined not to let the secret escape, for the neighbours would certainly have stoned them for a couple of abominable wretches, who could think of improving upon the good meat which God had sent them.

Nevertheless, strange stories got about. It was observed that Ho-ti's cottage was burnt down now more frequently than ever. Nothing but fires from this time forward. Some would break out in broad day, others in the night-time. As often as the sow farrowed, so sure was the house of Ho-ti to be in a blaze; and Ho-ti himself, which was the more remarkable, instead of chastising his son, seemed to grow more indulgent to him than ever. At length they were watched, the terrible mystery discovered, and father and son summoned to take their trial at Pekin, then an inconsiderable assize town. Evidence was given, the obnoxious food itself produced in court, and verdict about to be pronounced, when the foreman of the jury begged that some of the burnt pig, by which the culprits stood accused, might be handed into the box. He handled it, and they all handled it; and burning their fingers, as Bo-bo and his father had done before them, and nature prompting to each of them the same remedy, against the face of all the facts, and the clearest charge which judge had ever given—to the surprise of the whole court, townsfolk, strangers, reporters, and all present—without leaving the box, or any manner of consultation whatever, they brought in a simultaneous verdict of Not Guilty.

The judge, who was a shrewd fellow, winked at the

manifest iniquity of the decision: and when the court was dismissed, went privily and bought up all the pigs that could be had for love or money. In a few days his lordship's town-house was observed to be on fire. The thing took wing, and now there was nothing to be seen but fire in every direction. Fuel and pigs grew enormously dear all over the district. The insurance-officers, one and all, shut up shop. People built slighter and slighter every day, until it was feared that the very science of architecture would in no long time be lost to the world. Thus this custom of firing houses continued, till in process of time, says my manuscript, a sage arose, like our Locke, who made a discovery that the flesh of swine, or indeed of any other animal, might be cooked (*burnt*, as they called it), without the necessity of consuming a whole house to dress it. Then first began the rude form of a gridiron. Roasting by the string or spit came in a century or two later, I forget in whose dynasty. By such slow degrees, concludes the manuscript, do the most useful and seemingly the most obvious, arts make their way among mankind.

Without placing too implicit faith in the account above given, it must be agreed that if a worthy pretext for so dangerous an experiment as setting houses on fire (especially in these days) could be assigned in favour of any culinary object, that pretext and excuse might be found in ROAST PIG.

Of all the delicacies in the whole *mundus edibilis*, I will maintain it to be the most delicate—*princeps obsoniorum.*

I speak not of your grown porkers—things between pig and pork, those hobbydehoys—but a young and tender suckling, under a moon old, guiltless as yet of the

sty, with no original speck of the *amor immunditiæ*, the hereditary failing of the first parent, yet manifest—his voice as yet not broken, but something between a childish treble and a grumble—the mild fore-runner or *præludium* of a grunt.

He must be roasted. I am not ignorant that our ancestors ate them seethed, or boiled; but what a sacrifice of the exterior tegument!

There is no flavour comparable, I will contend, to that of the crisp, tawny, well-watched, not over-roasted, *crackling*, as it is well called. The very teeth are invited to their share of the pleasure at this banquet in overcoming the coy, brittle resistance—with the adhesive oleaginous—O call it not fat! but an indefinable sweetness growing up to it—the tender blossoming of fat—fat cropped in the bud—taken in the shoot—in the first innocence—the cream and quintessence of the child-pig's yet pure food—the lean, no lean, but a kind of animal manna—or, rather, fat and lean (if it must be so) so blended and running into each other, that both together make but one ambrosian result, or common substance.

Behold him, while he is "doing"—it seemeth rather a refreshing warmth than a scorching heat that he is so passive to. How equably he twirleth round the string! —Now he is just done. To see the extreme sensibility of that tender age! he hath wept out his pretty eyes—radiant jellies—shooting stars—

See him in the dish, his second cradle, how meek he lieth!—Wouldst thou have had this innocent grow up to the grossness and indocility which too often accompany maturer swinehood? Ten to one he would have proved a glutton, a sloven, an obstinate, disagreeable

animal, wallowing in all manner of filthy conversation. From these sins he is happily snatched away.

> Ere sin could blight or sorrow fade,
> Death came with timely care.

His memory is odoriferous. No clown curseth, while his stomach half rejecteth, the rank bacon; no coal-heaver bolteth him in reeking sausages; he hath a fair sepulchre in the grateful stomach of the judicious epicure, and for such a tomb might be content to die.

He is the best of sapors. Pine-apple is great. She is indeed almost too transcendent—a delight, if not sinful, yet so like to sinning that really a tender-conscienced person would do well to pause—too ravishing for mortal taste, she woundeth and excoriateth the lips that approach her. Like lovers' kisses, she biteth: she is a pleasure bordering on pain from the fierceness and insanity of her relish; but she stoppeth at the palate; she meddleth not with the appetite; and the coarsest hunger might barter her consistently for a mutton-chop.

Pig (let me speak his praise) is no less provocative of the appetite than he is satisfactory to the criticalness of the censorious palate. The strong man may batten on him, and the weakling refuseth not his mild juices.

Unlike to mankind's mixed characters, a bundle of virtues and vices, inexplicably intertwisted, and not to be unravelled without hazard, he is good throughout. No part of him is better or worse than another. He helpeth, as far as his little means extend, all around. He is the least envious of banquets. He is all neighbours' fare.

I am one of those who freely and ungrudgingly impart a share of the good things of this life which fall to their lot (few as mine are in this kind) to a friend, I protest

I take as great an interest in my friend's pleasures, his relishes, and proper satisfactions, as in my own. "Presents," I often say, "endear Absents." Hares, pheasants, partridges, snipes, barn-door chickens (those "tame villatic fowl"), capons, plovers, brawn, barrels of oysters, I dispense as freely as I receive them. I love to taste them, as it were, upon the tongue of my friend. But a stop must be put somewhere. One would not, like Lear, "give everything." I make my stand upon pig. Methinks it is an ingratitude to the giver of all good flavours to extra-domiciliate, or send out of the house slightly (under pretext of friendship, or I know not what,) a blessing so particularly adapted, predestined, I may say, to my individual palate — It argues an insensibility.

I remember a touch of conscience in this kind at school. My good old aunt, who never parted with me at the end of a holiday without stuffing a sweetmeat, or some nice thing into my pocket, had dismissed me one evening with a smoking plum-cake, fresh from the oven. In my way to school (it was over London Bridge) a grey-headed old beggar saluted me. (I have no doubt, at this time of day, that he was a counterfeit.) I had no pence to console him with, and in the vanity of self-denial, and the very coxcombry of charity, schoolboy-like, I made him a present of the whole cake. I walked on a little, buoyed up, as one is on such occasions, with a sweet soothing of self-satisfaction; but before I had got to the end of the bridge my better feelings returned, and I burst into tears, thinking how ungrateful I had been to my good aunt, to go and give her good gift away to a stranger that I had never seen before, and who might be a bad man for aught I knew; and then I thought of the pleasure my aunt would be taking in thinking that I (I myself, and

not another) would eat her nice cake. And what should I say to her the next time I saw her?—how naughty I was to part with her pretty present!—and the odour of that spicy cake came back upon my recollection, and the pleasure and the curiosity I had taken in seeing her make it, and her joy when she sent it to the oven, and how disappointed she would feel that I had never had a bit of it in my mouth at last. And I blamed my impertinent spirit of almsgiving, and out-of-place hypocrisy of goodness; and above all, I wished never to see the face again of that insidious, good-for-nothing, old grey impostor.

Our ancestors were nice in their method of sacrificing these tender victims. We read of pigs whipt to death with something of a shock, as we hear of any other obsolete custom. The age of discipline is gone by, or it would be curious to inquire (in a philosophical light merely) what effect this process might have towards intenerating and dulcifying a substance naturally so mild and dulcet as the flesh of young pigs. It looks like refining a violet. Yet we should be cautious, while we condemn the inhumanity how we censure the wisdom of the practice. It might impart a gusto.

I remember an hypothesis, argued upon by the young students when I was at St. Omer's, and maintained with much learning and pleasantry on both sides, "Whether, supposing that the flavour of a pig who obtained his death by whipping (*per flagellationem extremam*) superadded a pleasure upon the palate of a man more intense than any possible suffering we can conceive in the animal, is man justified in using that method of putting the animal to death?" I forget the decision.

His sauce should be considered: decidedly, a few

bread crumbs, done up with his liver and brains, and a dash of mild sage. But banish, dear Mrs. Cook, I beseech you, the whole onion tribe. Barbecue your whole hogs to your palate, steep them in shalots, stuff them out with plantations of the rank and guilty garlic; you cannot poison them, or make them stronger than they are; but consider, he is a weakling—a flower.

—Charles Lamb.

IV

DREAM CHILDREN; A REVERIE

CHILDREN love to listen to stories about their elders, when *they* were children; to stretch their imagination to the conception of a traditionary great-uncle or grandame whom they never saw. It was in this spirit that my little ones crept about me the other evening to hear about their great-grandmother Field, who lived in a great house in Norfolk, (a hundred times bigger than that in which they and papa lived,) which had been the scene (so at least it was generally believed in that part of the country) of the tragic incidents which they had lately become familiar with from the ballad of the Children in the Wood. Certain it is that the whole story of the children and their uncle was to be seen fairly carved out in wood upon the chimney-piece of the great hall, the whole story down to the Robin Redbreasts; till a foolish rich person pulled it down to set up a marble one of modern invention in its stead, with no story upon it. Here Alice put out one of her dear mother's looks, too tender to be called upbraiding. Then I went on to say how religious and how good their great-grandmother Field was, how beloved and respected by everybody, though she was not indeed the mistress of this great house, but had only the charge of it (and yet in some respects she might be said to be the mistress of it too) committed to her by the owner, who preferred living in a newer and more fashionable mansion

which he had purchased somewhere in the adjoining county; but still she lived in it in a manner as if it had been her own, and kept up the dignity of the great house in a sort while she lived, which afterward came to decay, and was nearly pulled down, and all its old ornaments stripped and carried away to the owner's other house, where they were set up, and looked as awkward as if some one were to carry away the old tombs they had seen lately at the Abbey, and stick them up in Lady C.'s tawdry gilt drawing-room. Here John smiled, as much as to say, "that would be foolish indeed." And then I told how, when she came to die, her funeral was attended by a concourse of all the poor, and some of the gentry too, of the neighbourhood for many miles round, to show their respect for her memory, because she had been such a good and religious woman; so good indeed that she knew all the Psaltery by heart, ay, and a great part of the Testament besides. Here little Alice spread her hands.

Then I told what a tall, upright, graceful person their great-grandmother Field once was; and how in her youth she was esteemed the best dancer (here Alice's little right foot played an involuntary movement, till, upon my looking grave, it desisted), the best dancer, I was saying, in the county, till a cruel disease, called a cancer, came, and bowed her down with pain; but it could never bend her good spirits, or make them stoop, but they were still upright, because she was so good and religious. Then I told how she was used to sleep by herself in a lone chamber of the great lone house; and how she believed that an apparition of two infants was to be seen at midnight gliding up and down the great staircase near where she slept, but she said

"those innocents would do her no harm"; and how frightened I used to be, though in those days I had my maid to sleep with me, because I was never half so good or religious as she; and yet I never saw the infants. Here John expanded his eyebrows and tried to look courageous. Then I told how good she was to all her grandchildren, having us to the great house in the holidays, where I in particular used to spend many hours by myself, in gazing upon the old busts of the twelve Cæsars, that had been Emperors of Rome, till the old marble heads would seem to live again, or I to be turned into marble with them; how I never could be tired with roaming about that huge mansion, with its vast empty rooms, with their worn-out hangings, fluttering tapestry, and carved oaken panels, with the gilding almost rubbed out; sometimes in the spacious old-fashioned gardens, which I had almost to myself, unless when now and then a solitary gardening man would cross me; and how the nectarines and peaches hung upon the walls, without my ever offering to pluck them, because they were forbidden fruit, unless now and then; and because I had more pleasure in strolling about among the old melancholy-looking yew-trees, or the firs, and picking up the red berries, and the fir-apples, which were good for nothing but to look at—or in lying about upon the fresh grass with all the fine garden smells around me—or basking in the orangery, till I could almost fancy myself ripening too along with the oranges and the limes in that grateful warmth—or in watching the dace that darted to and fro in the fish-pond at the bottom of the garden, with here and there a great sulky pike hanging midway down the water in silent state, as if it mocked at their impertinent friskings—I had more pleasure in

these busy-idle diversions than in all the sweet flavours of peaches, nectarines, oranges, and such-like common baits for children. Here John slyly deposited back upon the plate a bunch of grapes, which, not unobserved by Alice, he had meditated dividing with her, and both seemed willing to relinquish them for the present as irrelevant.

Then, in somewhat a more heightened tone, I told how, though their great-grandmother Field loved all her grandchildren, yet in an especial manner she might be said to love their uncle, John L———, because he was so handsome and spirited a youth, and a king to the rest of us; and, instead of moping about in solitary corners, like some of us, he would mount the most mettlesome horse he could get, when but an imp no bigger than themselves, and make it carry him half over the county in a morning, and join the hunters when there were any out (and yet he loved the old great house and gardens too, but had too much spirit to be always pent up within their boundaries); and how their uncle grew up to man's estate as brave as he was handsome, to the admiration of everybody, but of their great-grandmother Field most especially; and how he used to carry me upon his back when I was a lame-footed boy (for he was a good bit older than I) many a mile when I could not walk for pain; and how in after life he became lame-footed too, and I did not always, I fear, make allowances enough for him when he was impatient, and in pain, nor remember sufficiently how considerate he had been to me when I was lame-footed; and how when he died, though he had not been dead an hour, it seemed as if he had died a great while ago, such a distance there is betwixt life and death; and how I bore his death as I thought pretty

well at first, but afterwards it naunted and haunted me; and though I did not cry or take it to heart as some do, and as I think he would have done if I had died, yet I missed him all day long, and knew not till then how much I had loved him. I missed his kindness, and I missed his crossness, and wished him to be alive again, to be quarrelling with him (for we quarrelled sometimes), rather than not have him again, and was as uneasy without him as he, their poor uncle, must have been when the doctor took off his limb—Here the children fell a crying, and asked if their little mourning which they had on was not for Uncle John and they looked up, and prayed me not to go on about their uncle, but to tell them some stories about their pretty dead mother.

Then I told how for seven long years, in hope sometimes, sometimes in despair, yet persisting ever, I courted the fair Alice W——n; and as much as children could understand, I explained to them what coyness, and difficulty, and denial, meant in maidens—when suddenly, turning to Alice, the soul of the first Alice looked out at her eyes with such a reality of re-presentment, that I became in doubt which of them stood there before me, or whose that bright hair was; and while I stood gazing, both the children gradually grew fainter to my view, receding, and still receding, till nothing at last but two mournful features were seen in the uttermost distance, which, without speech, strangely impressed upon me the effects of speech: "We are not of Alice, nor of thee, nor are we children at all. The children of Alice call Bartrum father. We are nothing; less than nothing, and dreams. We are only what might have been, and must wait upon the tedious shores of Lethe millions of ages

before we have existence and a name"——and immediately awaking, I found myself quietly seated in my bachelor arm-chair, where I had fallen asleep, with the faithful Bridget unchanged by my side; but John L. (or James Elia) was gone forever.

—Charles Lamb.

V

CHRISTMAS DAY

WHEN I woke the next morning, it seemed as if all the events of the preceding evening had been a dream, and nothing but the identity of the ancient chamber convinced me of their reality. While I lay musing on my pillow, I heard the sound of little feet pattering outside of the door, and a whispering consultation. Presently a choir of small voices chanted forth an old Christmas carol, the burden of which was—

> Rejoice, our Saviour he was born
> On Christmas day in the morning.

I rose softly, slipt on my clothes, opened the door suddenly, and beheld one of the most beautiful little fairy groups that a painter could imagine. It consisted of a boy and two girls, the eldest not more than six, and lovely as seraphs. They were going the rounds of the house, and singing at every chamber door; but my sudden appearance frightened them into mute bashfulness. They remained for a moment playing on their lips with their fingers, and now and then stealing a shy glance from under their eyebrows, until, as if by one impulse, they scampered away, and as they turned an angle of the gallery, I heard them laughing in triumph at their escape.

Everything conspired to produce kind and happy feelings in this stronghold of old-fashioned hospitality.

The window of my chamber looked out upon what in summer would have been a beautiful landscape. There was a sloping lawn, a fine stream winding at the foot of it, and a trace of park beyond, with noble clumps of trees, and herds of deer. At a distance was a neat hamlet, with the smoke from the cottage chimneys hanging over it; and a church with its dark spire in strong relief against the clear, cold sky. The house was surrounded with evergreens, according to the English custom, which would have given almost an appearance of summer; but the morning was extremely frosty; the light vapour of the preceding evening had been precipitated by the cold, and covered all the trees and every blade of grass with its fine crystallisations. The rays of a bright morning sun had a dazzling effect among the glittering foliage. A robin, perched upon the top of a mountain ash that hung its clusters of red berries just before my window, was basking himself in the sunshine, and piping a few querulous notes; and a peacock was displaying all the glories of his train, and strutting with the pride and gravity of a Spanish grandee, on the terrace walk below.

I had scarcely dressed myself, when a servant appeared to invite me to family prayers. He showed me the way to a small chapel in the old wing of the house, where I found the principal part of the family already assembled in a kind of gallery, furnished with cushions, hassocks, and large prayer-books; the servants were seated on benches below. The old gentleman read prayers from a desk in front of the gallery, and Master Simon acted as clerk and made the responses; and I must do him the justice to say that he acquitted himself with great gravity and decorum.

The service was followed by a Christmas carol, which

Mr. Bracebridge himself had constructed from a poem of his favourite author, Herrick; and it had been adapted to an old church melody by Master Simon. As there were several good voices among the household, the effect was extremely pleasing; but I was particularly gratified by the exaltation of heart, and sudden sally of grateful feeling, with which the worthy squire delivered one stanza; his eye glistening, and his voice rambling out of all the bounds of time and tune:

"'Tis thou that crown'st my glittering hearth
With guiltlesse mirth,
And giv'st me Wassaile bowles to drink
Spiced to the brink:
Lord, 'tis thy plenty-dropping hand
That soiles my land:
And giv'st me for my bushell sowne,
Twice ten for one."

I afterward understood that early morning service was read on every Sunday and saint's day throughout the year, either by Bracebridge or by some member of the family. It was once almost universally the case at the seats of the nobility and gentry of England, and it is much to be regretted that the custom is falling into neglect; for the dullest observer must be sensible of the order and serenity prevalent in those households, where the occasional exercise of a beautiful form of worship in the morning gives, as it were, the key-note to every temper for the day, and attunes every spirit to harmony.

Our breakfast consisted of what the squire denominated true old English fare. He indulged in some bitter lamentation over modern breakfasts of tea and toast, which he censured as among the causes of modern effeminacy and weak nerves, and the decline of old English heartiness;

and though he admitted them to his table to suit the palates of his guests, yet there was a brave display of cold meats, wine, and ale, on the sideboard.

After breakfast I walked about the grounds with Frank Bracebridge and Master Simon, or, Mr. Simon, as he was called by every body but the squire. We were escorted by a number of gentlemanlike dogs, that seemed loungers about the establishment; from the frisking spaniel to the steady old stag-hound; the last of which was of a race that had been in the family time out of mind; they were all obedient to a dog-whistle which hung to Master Simon's button-hole, and in the midst of their gambols would glance an eye occasionally upon a small switch he carried in his hand.

The old mansion had a still more venerable look in the yellow sunshine than by pale moonlight; and I could not but feel the force of the squire's idea, that the formal terraces, heavily moulded balustrades, and clipped yew-trees, carried with them an air of proud aristocracy. There appeared to be an unusual number of peacocks about the place, and I was making some remarks upon what I termed a flock of them, that were basking under a sunny wall, when I was gently corrected in my phraseology by Master Simon, who told me that, according to the most ancient and approved treatise on hunting, I must say a *muster* of peacocks. "In the same way," added he, with a slight air of pedantry, "we say a flight of doves or swallows, a bevy of quails, a herd of deer, of wrens, or cranes, a skulk of foxes, or a building of rooks." He went on to inform me that, according to Sir Anthony Fitzherbert, we ought to ascribe to this bird "both understanding and glory; for, being praised, he will presently set up his tail, chiefly against the sun, to

the intent you may the better behold the beauty thereof. But at the fall of the leaf, when his tail falleth, he will mourn and hide himself in corners, till his tail come again as it was."

I could not help smiling at this display of small erudition on so whimsical a subject; but I found that the peacocks were birds of some consequence at the hall; for Frank Bracebridge informed me that they were great favourites with his father, who was extremely careful to keep up the breed; partly because they belonged to chivalry, and were in great request at the stately banquets of the olden time; and partly because they had a pomp and magnificence about them, highly becoming an old family mansion. Nothing, he was accustomed to say, had an air of greater state and dignity than a peacock perched upon an antique stone balustrade.

Master Simon had now to hurry off, having an appointment at the parish church with the village choristers, who were to perform some music of his selection. There was something extremely agreeable in the cheerful flow of animal spirits of the little man; and I confess I had been somewhat surprised at his apt quotations from authors who certainly were not in the range of every-day reading. I mentioned this last circumstance to Frank Bracebridge, who told me with a smile that Master Simon's whole stock of erudition was confined to some half a dozen old authors, which the squire had put into his hands, and which he read over and over, whenever he had a studious fit; as he sometimes had on a rainy day, or a long winter evening. Sir Anthony Fitzherbert's Book of Husbandry; Markham's Country Contentments; the Tretyse of Hunting, by Sir Thomas Cockayne, Knight; Izaak Walton's Angler, and two or

three more such ancient worthies of the pen, were his standard authorities; and, like all men who know but a few books, he looked up to them with a kind of idolatry, and quoted them on all occasions. As to his songs, they were chiefly picked out of old books in the squire's library, and adapted to tunes that were popular among the choice spirits of the last century. His practical application of scraps of literature, however, had caused him to be looked upon as a prodigy of book knowledge by all the grooms, huntsmen, and small sportsmen of the neighbourhood.

While we were talking we heard the distant tolling of the village bell, and I was told that the squire was a little particular in having his household at church on a Christmas morning; considering it a day of pouring out of thanks and rejoicing; for, as old Tusser observed,

> "At Christmas be merry, *and thankful withal,*
> And feast thy poor neighbours, the great with the small."

"If you are disposed to go to church," said Frank Bracebridge, "I can promise you a specimen of my cousin Simon's musical achievements. As the church is destitute of an organ, he has formed a band from the village amateurs, and established a musical club for their improvement; he has also sorted a choir, as he sorted my father's pack of hounds, according to the directions of Jervaise Markham, in his Country Contentments; for the bass he has sought out all the 'deep, solemn mouths,' and for the tenor the 'loud-ringing mouths,' among the country bumpkins; and for 'sweet mouths,' he has culled with curious taste among the prettiest lasses in the neighbourhood; though these last, he affirms, are the most difficult to keep in tune; your pretty female

singer being exceedingly wayward and capricious, and very liable to accident."

As the morning, though frosty, was remarkably fine and clear, the most of the family walked to the church, which was a very old building of gray stone, and stood near a village, about half a mile from the park gate. Adjoining it was a low snug parsonage, which seemed coeval with the church. The front of it was perfectly matted with a yew-tree, that had been trained against its walls, through the dense foliage of which apertures had been formed to admit light into the small antique lattice. As we passed this sheltered nest, the parson issued forth and preceded us.

I had expected to see a sleek well-conditioned pastor, such as is often found in a snug living in the vicinity of a rich patron's table, but I was disappointed. The parson was a little, meagre, black-looking man, with a grizzled wig that was too wide, and stood off from each ear; so that his head seemed to have shrunk away within it, like a dried filbert in its shell. He wore a rusty coat, with great skirts, and pockets that would have held the church Bible and prayer-book: and his small legs seemed still smaller, from being planted in large shoes, decorated with enormous buckles.

I was informed by Frank Bracebridge, that the parson had been a chum of his father's at Oxford, and had received this living shortly after the latter had come to his estate. He was a complete black-letter hunter, and would scarcely read a work printed in the Roman character. The editions of Caxton and Wynkin de Worde were his delight; and he was indefatigable in his researches after such old English writers as have fallen into oblivion from their worthlessness. In deference,

perhaps, to the notions of Mr. Bracebridge, he had made diligent investigations into the festive rites and holiday customs of former times; and had been as zealous in the inquiry as if he had been a boon companion; but it was merely with that plodding spirit with which men of adust temperament follow up any track of study, merely because it is denominated learning; indifferent to its intrinsic nature, whether it be the illustration of the wisdom, or of the ribaldry and obscenity of antiquity. He had pored over these old volumes so intensely, that they seemed to have been reflected in his countenance; which, if the face be indeed an index of the mind, might be compared to a title-page of black-letter.

On reaching the church porch, we found the parson rebuking the gray-headed sexton for having used mistletoe among the greens with which the church was decorated. It was, he observed, an unholy plant, profaned by having been used by the Druids in their mystic ceremonies; and though it might be innocently employed in the festive ornamenting of halls and kitchens, yet it had been deemed by the Fathers of the Church as unhallowed, and totally unfit for sacred purposes. So tenacious was he on this point, that the poor sexton was obliged to strip down a great part of the humble trophies of his taste, before the parson would consent to enter upon the service of the day.

The interior of the church was venerable but simple; on the walls were several mural monuments of the Bracebridges, and just beside the altar was a tomb of ancient workmanship, on which lay the effigy of a warrior in armour, with his legs crossed, a sign of his having been a crusader. I was told it was one of the family who had

signalised himself in the Holy Land, and the same whose picture hung over the fireplace in the hall.

During service, Master Simon stood up in the pew, and repeated the responses very audibly; evincing that kind of ceremonious devotion punctually observed by a gentleman of the old school, and a man of old family connections. I observed too that he turned over the leaves of a folio prayer-book with something of a flourish; possibly to show off an enormous seal-ring which enriched one of his fingers, and which had the look of a family relic. But he was evidently most solicitous about the musical part of the service, keeping his eye fixed intently on the choir, and beating time with much gesticulation and emphasis.

The orchestra was in a small gallery, and presented a most whimsical grouping of heads, piled one above the other, among which I particularly noticed that of the village tailor, a pale fellow with a retreating forehead and chin, who played on the clarionet, and seemed to have blown his face to a point; and there was another, a short pursy man, stooping and labouring at a bass-viol, so as to show nothing but the top of a round bald head, like the egg of an ostrich. There were two or three pretty faces among the female singers, to which the keen air of a frosty morning had given a bright rosy tint; but the gentlemen choristers had evidently been chosen, like old Cremona fiddles, more for tone than looks; and as several had to sing from the same book, there were clusterings of odd physiognomies, not unlike those groups of cherubs we sometimes see on country tombstones.

The usual services of the choir were managed tolerably well, the vocal parts generally lagging a little behind the instrumental, and some loitering fiddler now and then making up for lost time by travelling over a passage

with prodigious celerity, and clearing more bars than the keenest fox-hunter to be in at the death. But the great trial was an anthem that had been prepared and arranged by Master Simon, and on which he had founded great expectation. Unluckily there was a blunder at the very outset; the musicians became flurried; Master Simon was in a fever; everything went on lamely and irregularly until they came to a chorus beginning "Now let us sing with one accord," which seemed to be a signal for parting company: all became discord and confusion; each shifted for himself, and got to the end as well, or, rather, as soon as he could, excepting one old chorister in a pair of horn spectacles, bestriding and pinching a long sonorous nose, who happened to stand a little apart, and, being wrapped up in his own melody, kept on a quavering course, wriggling his head, ogling his book, and winding all up by a nasal solo of at least three bars' duration.

The parson gave us a most erudite sermon on the rites and ceremonies of Christmas, and the propriety of observing it not merely as a day of thanksgiving, but of rejoicing; supporting the correctness of his opinions by the earliest usages of the Church, and enforcing them by the authorities of Theophilus of Cesarea, St. Cyprian, St. Chrysostom, St. Augustine, and a cloud more of saints and fathers, from whom he made copious quotations. I was a little at a loss to perceive the necessity of such a mighty array of forces to maintain a point which no one present seemed inclined to dispute; but I soon found that the good man had a legion of ideal adversaries to contend with; having, in the course of his researches on the subject of Christmas, got completely embroiled in the sectarian controversies of the Revolution, when the

Puritans made such a fierce assault upon the ceremonies of the Church, and poor old Christmas was driven out of the land by proclamation of Parliament. The worthy parson lived but with times past, and knew but little of the present.

Shut up among worm-eaten tomes in the retirement of his antiquated little study, the pages of old times were to him as the gazettes of the day; while the era of the Revolution was mere modern history. He forgot that nearly two centuries had elapsed since the fiery persecution of poor mince-pie throughout the land; when plum porridge was denounced as "mere popery," and roast-beef as anti-christian; and that Christmas had been brought in again triumphantly with the merry court of King Charles at the Restoration. He kindled into warmth with the ardour of his contest, and the host of imaginary foes with whom he had to combat; he had a stubborn conflict with old Prynne and two or three other forgotten champions of the Round Heads, on the subject of Christmas festivity; and concluded by urging his hearers, in the most solemn and affecting manner, to stand to the traditional customs of their fathers, and feast and make merry on this joyful anniversary of the Church.

I have seldom known a sermon attended apparently with more immediate effects; for on leaving the church the congregation seemed one and all possessed with the gaiety of spirit so earnestly enjoined by their pastor. The elder folks gathered in knots in the church-yard greeting and shaking hands; and the children ran about crying Ule! Ule! and repeating some uncouth rhymes,*

* "Ule! Ule!
Three puddings in a pule
Crack nuts and cry ule!"

which the parson, who had joined us, informed me had been handed down from days of yore. The villagers doffed their hats to the squire as he passed, giving him the good wishes of the season with every appearance of heartfelt sincerity, and were invited by him to the hall, to take something to keep out the cold of the weather; and I heard blessings uttered by several of the poor, which convinced me that, in the midst of his enjoyments, the worthy old cavalier had not forgotten the true Christmas virtue of charity.

On our way homeward his heart seemed overflowed with generous and happy feelings. As we passed over a rising ground which commanded something of a prospect, the sounds of rustic merriment now and then reached our ears: the squire paused for a few moments, and looked around with an air of inexpressible benignity. The beauty of the day was in itself sufficient to inspire philanthropy. Notwithstanding the frostiness of the morning, the sun in his cloudless journey had acquired sufficient power to melt away the thin covering of snow from every southern declivity, and to bring out the living green which adorns an English landscape even in midwinter. Large tracts of smiling verdure contrasted with the dazzling whiteness of the shaded slopes and hollows. Every sheltered bank, on which the broad rays rested, yielded its silver rill of cold and limpid water glittering through the dripping grass; and sent up slight exhalations to contribute to the thin haze that hung just above the surface of the earth. There was something truly cheering in this triumph of warmth and verdure over the frosty thraldom of winter; it was, as the squire observed, an emblem of Christmas hospitality, breaking through the chills of ceremony and selfishness, and thawing every

heart into a flow. He pointed with pleasure to the indications of good cheer reeking from the chimneys of the comfortable farmhouses, and low thatched cottages. "I love," said he, "to see this day well kept by rich and poor; it is a great thing to have one day in the year, at least, when you are sure of being welcome wherever you go, and of having, as it were, the world thrown all open to you; and I am almost disposed to join with Poor Robin, in his malediction on every churlish enemy to this honest festival—

> 'Those who at Christmas do repine
> And would fain hence despatch him,
> May they with old Duke Humphry dine,
> Or else may Squire Ketch catch 'em.' "

The squire went on to lament the deplorable decay of the games and amusements which were once prevalent at this season among the lower orders, and countenanced by the higher; when the old halls of the castles and manor-houses were thrown open at daylight; when the tables were covered with brawn, and beef, and humming ale; when the harp and the carol resounded all day long, and when rich and poor were alike welcome to enter and make merry. "Our old games and local customs," said he, "had a great effect in making the peasant fond of his home, and the promotion of them by the gentry made him fond of his lord. They made the times merrier, and kinder, and better, and I can truly say, with one of our old poets:

> 'I like them well—the curious preciseness
> And all-pretended gravity of those
> That seek to banish hence these harmless sports,
> Have thrust away much ancient honesty.' "

"The nation," continued he, "is altered; we have almost lost our simple true-hearted peasantry. They have broken asunder from the higher classes, and seem to think their interests are separate. They have become too knowing, and begin to read newspapers, listen to alehouse politicians, and talk of reform. I think one mode to keep them in good humour in these hard times would be for the nobility and gentry to pass more time on their estates, mingle more among the country people, and set the merry old English games going again."

Such was the good squire's project for mitigating public discontent: and, indeed, he had once attempted to put his doctrine in practice, and a few years before had kept open house during the holidays in the old style. The country people, however, did not understand how to play their parts in the scene of hospitality; many uncouth circumstances occurred; the manor was overrun by all the vagrants of the country, and more beggars drawn into the neighbourhood in one week than the parish officers could get rid of in a year. Since then, he had contented himself with inviting the decent part of the neighbouring peasantry to call at the hall on Christmas day, and with distributing beef, and bread, and ale, among the poor, that they might make merry in their own dwellings.

We had not been long home when the sound of music was heard from a distance. A band of country lads without coats, their shirt sleeves fancifully tied with ribbons, their hats decorated with greens and clubs in their hands, were seen advancing up the avenue, followed by a large number of villagers and peasantry. They stopped before the hall door, where the music struck up a peculiar air, and the lads performed a curious and intricate

dance, advancing, retreating, and striking their clubs together, keeping exact time to the music; while one, whimsically crowned with a fox's skin, the tail of which flaunted down his back, kept capering round the skirts of the dance, and rattling a Christmas box with many antic gesticulations.

The squire eyed this fanciful exhibition with great interest and delight, and gave me a full account of its origin, which he traced to the times when the Romans held possession of the island; plainly proving that this was a lineal descendant of the sword dance of the ancients. "It was now," he said, "nearly extinct, but he had accidentally met with traces of it in the neighbourhood, and had encouraged its revival; though, to tell the truth, it was too apt to be followed up by the rough cudgel play, and broken heads in the evening."

After the dance was concluded, the whole party was entertained with brawn and beef, and stout home-brewed. The squire himself mingled among the rustics, and was received with awkward demonstrations of deference and regard. It is true I perceived two or three of the younger peasants, as they were raising their tankards to their mouths, when the squire's back was turned, making something of a grimace, and giving each other the wink; but the moment they caught my eye they pulled grave faces, and were exceedingly demure. With Master Simon, however, they all seemed more at their ease. His varied occupations and amusements had made him well known throughout the neighbourhood. He was a visitor at every farmhouse and cottage; gossiped with the farmers and their wives; romped with their daughters; and, like that type of a vagrant bachelor, the humblebee, tolled the sweets from all the rosy lips of the country round.

The bashfulness of the guests soon gave way before good cheer and affability. There is something genuine and affectionate in the gaiety of the lower orders, when it is excited by the bounty and familiarity of those above them; the warm glow of gratitude enters into their mirth, and a kind word or a small pleasantry frankly uttered by a patron, gladdens the heart of the dependant more than oil and wine. When the squire had retired, the merriment increased, and there was much joking and laughter, particularly between Master Simon and a hale, ruddy-faced, white-headed farmer, who appeared to be the wit of the village; for I observed all his companions to wait with open mouths for his retorts, and burst into a gratuitous laugh before they could well understand them.

The whole house indeed seemed abandoned to merriment: as I passed to my room to dress for dinner, I heard the sound of music in a small court, and looking through a window that commanded it, I perceived a band of wandering musicians, with pandean pipes and tambourine; a pretty coquettish housemaid was dancing a jig with a smart country lad, while several of the other servants were looking on. In the midst of her sport the girl caught a glimpse of my face at the window, and, colouring up, ran off with an air of roguish affected confusion.

—Washington Irving.

VI

STRATFORD-ON-AVON

TO A homeless man, who has no spot on this wide world which he can truly call his own, there is a momentary feeling of something like independence and territorial consequence, when, after a weary day's travel, he kicks off his boots, thrusts his feet into slippers, and stretches himself before an inn fire. Let the world without go as it may; let kingdoms rise or fall, so long as he has the wherewithal to pay his bill, he is, for the time being, the very monarch of all he surveys. The arm-chair is his throne, the poker his sceptre, and the little parlour, some twelve feet square, his undisputed empire. It is a morsel of certainty, snatched from the midst of the uncertainties of life; it is a sunny moment gleaming out kindly on a cloudy day: and he who has advanced some way on the pilgrimage of existence, knows the importance of husbanding even morsels and moments of enjoyment. "Shall I not take mine ease in mine inn?" thought I, as I gave the fire a stir, lolled back in my elbow-chair, and cast a complacent look about the little parlour of the Red Horse, at Stratford-on-Avon.

The words of sweet Shakespeare were just passing through my mind as the clock struck midnight from the tower of the church in which he lies buried. There was a gentle tap at the door, and a pretty chambermaid, putting in her smiling face, inquired, with a hesitating air, whether I had rung. I understood it as a modest

hint that it was time to retire. My dream of absolute dominion was at an end; so abdicating my throne, like a prudent potentate, to avoid being deposed, and putting the Stratford Guide-Book under my arm, as a pillow companion, I went to bed, and dreamt all night of Shakespeare, the jubilee, and David Garrick.

The next morning was one of those quickening mornings which we sometimes have in early spring; for it was about the middle of March. The chills of a long winter had suddenly given way; the north wind had spent its last gasp; and a mild air came stealing from the west, breathing the breath of life into nature, and wooing every bud and flower to burst forth into fragrance and beauty.

I had come to Stratford on a poetical pilgrimage. My first visit was to the house where Shakespeare was born, and where, according to tradition, he was brought up to his father's craft of wool-combing. It is a small, mean-looking edifice of wood and plaster, a true nestling-place of genius, which seems to delight in hatching its offspring in by-corners. The walls of its squalid chambers are covered with names and inscriptions in every language, by pilgrims of all nations, ranks, and conditions, from the prince to the peasant; and present a simple, but striking instance of the spontaneous and universal homage of mankind to the great poet of nature.

The house is shown by a garrulous old lady, in a frosty red face, lighted up by a cold blue anxious eye, and garnished with artificial locks of flaxen hair, curling from under an exceedingly dirty cap. She was peculiarly assiduous in exhibiting the relics with which this, like all other celebrated shrines, abounds. There was the shattered stock of the very match-lock with which Shakespeare shot the deer, on his poaching exploits. There,

too, was his tobacco-box; which proves that he was a rival smoker of Sir Walter Raleigh: the sword also with which he played Hamlet; and the identical lantern with which Friar Laurence discovered Romeo and Juliet at the tomb! There was an ample supply also of Shakespeare's mulberry-tree, which seems to have as extraordinary powers of self-multiplication as the wood of the true cross; of which there is enough extant to build a ship of the line.

The most favourite object of curiosity, however, is Shakespeare's chair. It stands in the chimney nook of a small gloomy chamber, just behind what was his father's shop. Here he may many a time have sat when a boy, watching the slowly revolving spit with all the longing of an urchin; or of an evening, listening to the cronies and gossips of Stratford, dealing forth church-yard tales and legendary anecdotes of the troublesome times of England. In this chair it is the custom of every one that visits the house to sit: whether this be done with the hope of imbibing any of the inspiration of the bard I am at a loss to say, I merely mention the fact; and mine hostess privately assured me, that, though built of solid oak, such was the fervent zeal of devotees, that the chair had to be new bottomed at least once in three years. It is worthy of notice also, in the history of this extraordinary chair, that it partakes something of the volatile nature of the Santa Casa of Loretto, or the flying chair of the Arabian enchanter; for though sold some few years since to a northern princess, yet, strange to tell, it has found its way back again to the old chimney corner.

I am always of easy faith in such matters, and am ever willing to be deceived, where the deceit is pleasant and costs nothing. I am therefore a ready believer in relics,

legends, and local anecdotes of goblins and great men; and would advise all travellers who travel for their gratification to be the same. What is it to us, whether these stories be true or false, so long as we can persuade ourselves into the belief of them, and enjoy all the charm of the reality? There is nothing like resolute good-humoured credulity in these matters; and on this occasion I went even so far as willingly to believe the claims of mine hostess to a lineal descent from the poet, when, luckily, for my faith, she put into my hands a play of her own composition, which set all belief in her consanguinity at defiance.

From the birth-place of Shakespeare a few paces brought me to his grave. He lies buried in the chancel of the parish church, a large and venerable pile, mouldering with age, but richly ornamented. It stands on the banks of the Avon, on an embowered point, and separated by adjoining gardens from the suburbs of the town. Its situation is quiet and retired: the river runs murmuring at the foot of the churchyard, and the elms which grow upon its banks droop their branches into its clear bosom. An avenue of limes, the boughs of which are curiously interlaced, so as to form in summer an arched way of foliage, leads up from the gate of the yard to the church porch. The graves are overgrown with grass; the gray tombstones, some of them nearly sunk into the earth, are half covered with moss, which has likewise tinted the reverend old building. Small birds have built their nests among the cornices and fissures of the walls, and keep up a continual flutter and chirping; and rooks are sailing and cawing about its lofty gray spire.

In the course of my rambles I met with the gray-headed sexton, Edmonds, and accompanied him home

to get the key of the church. He had lived in Stratford, man and boy, for eighty years, and seemed still to consider himself a vigorous man, with the trivial exception that he had nearly lost the use of his legs for a few years past. His dwelling was a cottage, looking out upon the Avon and its bordering meadows; and was a picture of that neatness, order, and comfort, which pervade the humblest dwellings in this country. A low white-washed room, with a stone floor carefully scrubbed, served for parlour, kitchen, and hall. Rows of pewter and earthen dishes glittered along the dresser. On an old oaken table, well rubbed and polished, lay the family Bible and prayer-book, and the drawer contained the family library, composed of about half a score of well-thumbed volumes. An ancient clock, that important article of cottage furniture, ticked on the opposite side of the room, with a bright warming-pan hanging on one side of it, and the old man's horn-handled Sunday cane on the other. The fireplace, as usual, was wide and deep enough to admit a gossip knot within its jambs. In one corner sat the old man's granddaughter sewing, a pretty blue-eyed girl, —and in the opposite corner was a superannuated crony, whom he addressed by the name of John Ange, and who, I found, had been his companion from childhood. They had played together in infancy; they had worked together in manhood; they were now tottering about and gossiping away the evening of life; and in a short time they will probably be buried together in the neighbouring churchyard. It is not often that we see two streams of existence running thus evenly and tranquilly side by side; it is only in such quiet "bosom scenes" of life that they are to be met with.

I had hoped to gather some traditionary anecdotes of

the bard from these ancient chroniclers; but they had nothing new to impart. The long interval during which Shakespeare's writings lay in comparative neglect has spread its shadow over his history; and it is his good or evil lot that scarcely anything remains to his biographers but a scanty handful of conjectures.

The sexton and his companion had been employed as carpenters on the preparations for the celebrated Stratford jubilee, and they remembered Garrick, the prime mover of the fête, who superintended the arrangements, and who, according to the sexton, was "a short punch man, very lively and bustling." John Ange had assisted also in cutting down Shakespeare's mulberry tree, of which he had a morsel in his pocket for sale; no doubt a sovereign quickener of literary conception.

I was grieved to hear these two worthy wights speak very dubiously of the eloquent dame who shows the Shakespeare house. John Ange shook his head when I mentioned her valuable collection of relics, particularly her remains of the mulberry tree; and the old sexton even expressed a doubt as to Shakespeare having been born in her house. I soon discovered that he looked upon her mansion with an evil eye, as a rival to the poet's tomb; the latter having comparatively but few visitors. Thus it is that historians differ at the very outset, and mere pebbles make the stream of truth diverge into different channels even at the fountain head.

We approached the church through the avenue of limes, and entered by a Gothic porch, highly ornamented with carved doors of massive oak. The interior is spacious, and the architecture and embellishments superior to those of most country churches. There are several ancient monuments of nobility and gentry, over some

of which hang funeral escutcheons, and banners dropping piecemeal from the walls. The tomb of Shakespeare is in the chancel. The place is solemn and sepulchral. Tall elms wave before the pointed windows, and the Avon, which runs at a short distance from the walls, keeps up a low perpetual murmur. A flat stone marks the spot where the bard is buried. There are four lines inscribed on it, said to have been written by himself, and which have in them something extremely awful. If they are indeed his own, they show that solicitude about the quiet of the grave, which seems natural to fine sensibilities and thoughtful minds.

> "Good friend, for Jesus' sake forbeare
> To dig the dust enclosed here.
> Blessed be he that spares these stones,
> And curst be he that moves my bones."

Just over the grave, in a niche of the wall, is a bust of Shakespeare, put up shortly after his death, and considered as a resemblance. The aspect is pleasant and serene, with a finely-arched forehead; and I thought I could read in it clear indications of that cheerful, social disposition, by which he was as much characterised among his contemporaries as by the vastness of his genius. The inscription mentions his age at the time of his decease—fifty-three years; an untimely death for the world: for what fruit might not have been expected from the golden autumn of such a mind, sheltered as it was from the stormy vicissitudes of life, and flourishing in the sunshine of popular and royal favour.

The inscription on the tombstone has not been without its effect. It has prevented the removal of his remains from the bosom of his native place to Westminster Abbey,

which was at one time contemplated. A few years since also, as some labourers were digging to make an adjoining vault, the earth caved in, so as to leave a vacant space almost like an arch, through which one might have reached into his grave. No one, however, presumed to meddle with his remains so awfully guarded by a malediction; and lest any of the idle or the curious, or any collector of relics, should be tempted to commit depredations, the old sexton kept watch over the place for two days, until the vault was finished and the aperture closed again. He told me that he had made bold to look in at the hole, but could see neither coffin nor bones; nothing but dust. It was something, I thought, to have seen the dust of Shakespeare.

Next to this grave are those of his wife, his favourite daughter, Mrs. Hall, and others of his family. On a tomb close by, also, is a full-length effigy of his old friend John Combe of usurious memory; on whom he is said to have written a ludicrous epitaph. There are other monuments around, but the mind refuses to dwell on anything that is not connected with Shakespeare. His idea pervades the place; the whole pile seems but as his mausoleum. The feelings, no longer checked and thwarted by doubt, here indulge in perfect confidence: other traces of him may be false or dubious, but here is palpable evidence and absolute certainty. As I trod the sounding pavement, there was something intense and thrilling in the idea, that, in very truth, the remains of Shakespeare were mouldering beneath my feet. It was a long time before I could prevail upon myself to leave the place; and as I passed through the churchyard, I plucked a branch from one of the yew trees, the only relic that I have brought from Stratford.

I had now visited the usual objects of a pilgrim's devotion, but I had a desire to see the old family seat of the Lucys, at Charlecot, and to ramble through the park where Shakespeare, in company with some of the roysterers of Stratford, committed his youthful offence of deer-stealing. In this hare-brained exploit we are told that he was taken prisoner, and carried to the keeper's lodge, where he remained all night in doleful captivity. When brought into the presence of Sir Thomas Lucy, his treatment must have been galling and humiliating; for it so wrought upon his spirit as to produce a rough pasquinade, which was affixed to the park gate at Charlecot.

This flagitious attack upon the dignity of the knight so incensed him, that he applied to a lawyer at Warwick to put the severity of the laws in force against the rhyming deer-stalker. Shakespeare did not wait to brave the united puissance of a knight of the shire and a country attorney. He forthwith abandoned the pleasant banks of the Avon and his paternal trade; wandered away to London; became a hanger-on to the theatres; then an actor; and, finally, wrote for the stage; and thus, through the persecution of Sir Thomas Lucy, Stratford lost an indifferent wool-comber, and the world gained an immortal poet. He retained, however, for a long time, a sense of the harsh treatment of the Lord of Charlecot, and revenged himself in his writings; but in the sportive way of a good-natured mind. Sir Thomas is said to be the original Justice Shallow, and the satire is slyly fixed upon him by the justice's armorial bearings, which, like those of the knight, had white luces in the quarterings.

Various attempts have been made by his biographers to soften and explain away this early transgression of the poet; but I look upon it as one of those thoughtless

exploits natural to his situation and turn of mind. Shakespeare, when young, had doubtless all the wildness and irregularity of an ardent, undisciplined, and undirected genius. The poetic temperament has naturally something in it of the vagabond. When left to itself it runs loosely and wildly, and delights in every thing eccentric and licentious. It is often a turn-up of a die, in the gambling freaks of fate, whether a natural genius shall turn out a great rogue or a great poet; and had not Shakespeare's mind fortunately taken a literary bias, he might have as daringly transcended all civil, as he has all dramatic laws.

I have little doubt that, in early life, when running, like an unbroken colt, about the neighbourhood of Stratford, he was to be found in the company of all kinds of odd anomalous characters; that he associated with all the madcaps of the place, and was one of those unlucky urchins, at mention of whom old men shake their heads, and predict that they will one day come to the gallows. To him the poaching in Sir Thomas Lucy's park was doubtless like a foray to a Scottish knight, and struck his eager, and, as yet untamed, imagination, as something delightfully adventurous.

The old mansion of Charlecot and its surrounding park still remain in the possession of the Lucy family, and are peculiarly interesting, from being connected with this whimsical but eventful circumstance in the scanty history of the bard. As the house stood but little more than three miles' distance from Stratford, I resolved to pay it a pedestrian visit, that I might stroll leisurely through some of those scenes from which Shakespeare must have derived his earliest ideas of rural imagery.

The country was yet naked and leafless; but English

scenery is always verdant, and the sudden change in the temperature of the weather was surprising in its quickening effects upon the landscape. It was inspiring and animating to witness this first awakening of spring; to feel its warm breath stealing over the senses; to see the moist mellow earth beginning to put forth the green sprout and the tender blade: and the trees and shrubs, in their reviving tints and bursting buds, giving the promise of returning foliage and flower. The cold snow-drop, that little borderer on the skirts of winter, was to be seen with its chaste white blossoms in the small gardens before the cottages. The bleating of the new-dropt lambs was faintly heard from the fields. The sparrow twittered about the thatched eaves and budding hedges; the robin threw a livelier note into his late querulous wintry strain; and the lark, springing up from the reeking bosom of the meadow, towered away into the bright fleecy cloud, pouring forth torrents of melody. As I watched the little songster, mounting up higher and higher, until his body was a mere speck on the white bosom of the cloud, while the ear was still filled with his music, it called to mind Shakespeare's exquisite little song in Cymbeline:

> Hark! hark! the lark at heaven's gate sings,
> And Phœbus 'gins arise,
> His steeds to water at those springs,
> On chaliced flowers that lies.
>
> And winking mary-buds begin
> To ope their golden eyes;
> With every thing that pretty bin,
> My lady sweet arise!

Indeed the whole country about here is poetic ground: every thing is associated with the idea of Shakespeare.

Every old cottage that I saw, I fancied into some resort of his boyhood, where he had acquired his intimate knowledge of rustic life and manners, and heard those legendary tales and wild superstitions which he has woven like witchcraft into his dramas. For in his time, we are told, it was a popular amusement in winter evenings "to sit round the fire, and tell merry tales of errant knights, queens, lovers, lords, ladies, giants, dwarfs, thieves, cheaters, witches, fairies, goblins, and friars."

My route for a part of the way lay in sight of the Avon which made a variety of the most fancy doublings and windings through a wide and fertile valley; sometimes glittering from among willows, which fringed its borders; sometimes disappearing among groves, or beneath green banks; and sometimes rambling out into full view, and making an azure sweep round a slope of meadow land. This beautiful bosom of country is called the Vale of the Red Horse. A distant line of undulating blue hills seems to be its boundary, whilst all the soft intervening landscape lies in a manner enchained in the silver links of the Avon.

After pursuing the road for about three miles, I turned off into a footpath, which led along the borders of fields, and under hedgerows to a private gate of the park; there was a stile, however, for the benefit of the pedestrian; there being a public right of way through the grounds. I delight in these hospitable estates, in which every one has a kind of property—at least as far as the footpath is concerned. It in some measure reconciles a poor man to his lot, and, what is more, to the better lot of his neighbour, thus to have parks and pleasure-grounds thrown open for his recreation. He breathes the pure air as freely, and lolls as luxuriously under the shade, as the

lord of the soil; and if he has not the privilege of calling all that he sees his own, he has not, at the same time, the trouble of paying for it, and keeping it in order.

I now found myself among noble avenues of oaks and elms, whose vast size bespoke the growth of centuries. The wind sounded solemnly among their branches, and the rooks cawed from their hereditary nests in the tree tops. The eye ranged through a long lessening vista, with nothing to interrupt the view but a distant statue; and a vagrant deer stalking like a shadow across the opening.

There is something about these stately old avenues that has the effect of Gothic architecture, not merely from the pretended similarity of form, but from their bearing the evidence of long duration, and of having had their origin in a period of time with which we associate ideas of romantic grandeur. They betoken also the long-settled dignity, and proudly-concentrated independence of an ancient family; and I have heard a worthy but aristocratic old friend observe, when speaking of the sumptuous palaces of modern gentry, that "money could do much with stone and mortar, but, thank Heaven, there was no such thing as suddenly building up an avenue of oaks."

It was from wandering in early life among this rich scenery, and about the romantic solitudes of the adjoining park of Fullbroke, which then formed a part of the Lucy estate, that some of Shakespeare's commentators have supposed he derived his noble forest meditations of Jaques, and the enchanting woodland pictures in "As You Like It." It is in lonely wanderings through such scenes, that the mind drinks deep but quiet draughts of inspiration, and becomes intensely sensible of the beauty

and majesty of nature. The imagination kindles into reverie and rapture; vague but exquisite images and ideas keep breaking upon it; and we revel in a mute and almost incommunicable luxury of thought. It was in some such mood, and perhaps under one of those very trees before me, which threw their broad shades over the grassy banks and quivering waters of the Avon, that the poet's fancy may have sallied forth into that little song which breathes the very soul of a rural voluptuary:

> Under the green wood tree,
> Who loves to lie with me,
> And tune his merry throat
> Unto the sweet bird's note,
> Come hither, come hither, come hither.
> Here shall he see
> No enemy,
> But winter and rough weather.

I had now come in sight of the house. It is a large building of brick, with stone quoins, and is in the Gothic style of Queen Elizabeth's day, having been built in the first year of her reign. The exterior remains very nearly in its original state, and may be considered a fair specimen of the residence of a wealthy country gentleman of those days. A great gateway opens from the park into a kind of courtyard in front of the house, ornamented with a grass-plot, shrubs, and flower-beds. The gateway is in imitation of the ancient barbican; being a kind of outpost, and flanked by towers; though evidently for mere ornament, instead of defence. The front of the house is completely in the old style; with stone-shafted casements, a great bow-window of heavy stone-work, and a portal with armorial bearings over it, carved in stone.

At each corner of the building is an octagon tower, surmounted by a gilt ball and weather-cock.

The Avon, which winds through the park, makes a bend just at the foot of a gently-sloping bank, which sweeps down from the rear of the house. Large herds of deer were feeding or reposing upon its borders; and swans were sailing majestically upon its bosom. As I contemplated the venerable old mansion, I called to mind Falstaff's encomium on Justice Shallow's abode, and the affected indifference and real vanity of the latter:

Falstaff. You have a goodly dwelling and a rich.
Shallow. Barren, barren, barren; beggars all, beggars all, Sir John:—marry, good air."

What may have been the joviality of the old mansion in the days of Shakespeare, it had now an air of stillness and solitude. The great iron gateway that opened into the courtyard was locked; there was no show of servants bustling about the place; the deer gazed quietly at me as I passed, being no longer harried by the moss-troopers of Stratford. The only sign of domestic life that I met with was a white cat, stealing with wary look and stealthy pace towards the stables, as if on some nefarious expedition. I must not omit to mention the carcass of a scoundrel crow which I saw suspended against the barn wall, as it shows that the Lucys still inherit that lordly abhorrence of poachers, and maintain that rigorous exercise of territorial power which was so strenuously manifested in the case of the bard.

After prowling about for some time, I at length found my way to a lateral portal, which was the every-day entrance to the mansion. I was courteously received by a worthy old housekeeper, who, with the civility and

communicativeness of her order, showed me the interior of the house. The greater part has undergone alterations, and been adapted to modern tastes and modes of living; there is a fine old oaken staircase; and the great hall, that noble feature in an ancient manor-house, still retains much of the appearance it must have had in the days of Shakespeare. The ceiling is arched and lofty; and at one end is a gallery in which stands an organ. The weapons and trophies of the chase, which formerly adorned the hall of a country gentleman, have made way for family portraits. There is a wide hospitable fireplace, calculated for an ample old-fashioned wood fire, formerly the rallying-place of winter festivity. On the opposite side of the hall is the huge Gothic bow-window, with stone shafts, which looks out upon the courtyard. Here are emblazoned in stained glass the armorial bearings of the Lucy family for many generations, some being dated in 1558. I was delighted to observe in the quarterings the three *white luces*, by which the character of Sir Thomas was first identified with that of Justice Shallow. They are mentioned in the first scene of the "Merry Wives of Windsor," where the Justice is in a rage with Falstaff for having "beaten his men, killed his deer, and broken into his lodge." The poet had no doubt the offences of himself and his comrades in mind at the time, and we may suppose the family pride and vindictive threats of the puissant Shallow to be a caricature of the pompous indignation of Sir Thomas.

Shallow. Sir Hugh, persuade me not: I will make a Star-Chamber matter of it; if he were twenty John Falstaffs, he shall not abuse Sir Robert Shallow, Esq.

Slender. In the county of Gloster, justice of peace, and *coram.*

Shallow. Ay, cousin Slender, and *custalorum.*

Slender. Ay, and *ratalorum* too, and a gentleman born, master parson; who writes himself *Armigero* in any bill, warrant, quittance, or obligation, *Armigero.*

Shallow. Ay, that I do; and have done any time these three hundred years.

Slender. All his successors gone before him have done't, and all his ancestors that come after him may; they may give the dozen *white luces* in their coat. . . .

Shallow. The council shall hear it; it is a riot.

Evans. It is not meet the council hear of a riot; there is no fear of Got in a riot; the council, hear you, shall desire to hear the fear of Got, and not to hear a riot; take vour vizaments in that.

Shallow. Ha! o' my life, if I were young again, the sword should end it!

Near the window thus emblazoned hung a portrait by Sir Peter Lely, of one of the Lucy family, a great beauty of the time of Charles the Second: the old housekeeper shook her head as she pointed to the picture, and informed me that this lady had been sadly addicted to cards, and had gambled away a great portion of the family estate, among which was that part of the park where Shakespeare and his comrades had killed the deer. The lands thus lost had not been entirely regained by the family even at the present day. It is but justice to this recreant dame to confess that she had a surpassingly fine hand and arm.

The picture which most attracted my attention was a great painting over the fireplace, containing likenesses of Sir Thomas Lucy and his family, who inhabited the hall in the latter part of Shakespeare's lifetime. I at first thought that it was the vindictive knight himself, but the housekeeper assured me that it was his son, the only likeness extant of the former being an effigy upon his tomb in the church of the neighbouring hamlet of Charlecot. The picture gives a lively idea of the costume

and manners of the time. Sir Thomas is dressed in ruff and doublet; white shoes with roses in them; and has a peaked yellow, or, as Master Slender would say, "a cane-coloured beard." His lady is seated on the opposite side of the picture, in wide ruff and long stomacher, and the children have a most venerable stiffness and formality of dress. Hounds and spaniels are mingled in the family group; a hawk is seated on his perch in the foreground, and one of the children holds a bow;—all intimating the knight's skill in hunting, hawking, and archery—so indispensable to an accomplished gentleman in those days.

I regretted to find that the ancient furniture of the hall had disappeared; for I had hoped to meet with the stately elbow-chair of carved oak, in which the country squire of former days was wont to sway the sceptre of empire over his rural domains; and in which it might be presumed the redoubted Sir Thomas sat enthroned in awful state when the recreant Shakespeare was brought before him. As I like to deck out pictures for my own entertainment, I pleased myself with the idea that this very hall had been the scene of the unlucky bard's examination on the morning after his captivity in the lodge. I fancied to myself the rural potentate, surrounded by his body-guard of butler, pages, and blue-coated serving-men, with their badges; while the luckless culprit was brought in, forlorn and chopfallen, in the custody of gamekeepers, huntsmen, and whippers-in, and followed by a rabble rout of country clowns. I fancied bright faces of curious housemaids peeping from the half-opened doors; while from the gallery the fair daughters of the knight leaned gracefully forward, eyeing the youthful prisoner with that pity "that dwells in womanhood." Who would have thought that this poor varlet, thus

trembling before the brief authority of a country squire, and the sport of rustic boors, was soon to become the delight of princes, the theme of all tongues and ages, the dictator to the human mind, and was to confer immortality on his oppressor by a caricature and a lampoon!

I was now invited by the butler to walk into the garden, and I felt inclined to visit the orchard and arbour where the justice treated Sir John Falstaff and Cousin Slender "to a last year's pippin of his own grafting, with a dish of caraways"; but I had already spent so much of the day in my ramblings that I was obliged to give up any further investigations. When about to take my leave I was gratified by the civil entreaties of the housekeeper and butler, that I would take some refreshment: an instance of good old hospitality which, I grieve to say, we castle-hunters seldom meet with in modern days. I make no doubt it is a virtue which the present representative of the Lucys inherits from his ancestors; for Shakespeare, even in his caricature, makes Justice Shallow importunate in this respect, as witness his pressing instances to Falstaff.

"By cock and pye, sir, you shall not away to-night. . . . I will not excuse you; you shall not be excused; excuses shall not be admitted; there is no excuse shall serve; you shall not be excused. . . . Some pigeons, Davy; a couple of short-legged hens; a joint of mutton; and any pretty little tiny kickshaws, tell William Cook."

I now bade a reluctant farewell to the old hall. My mind had become so completely possessed by the imaginary scenes and characters connected with it, that I seemed to be actually living among them. Everything brought them as it were before my eyes; and as the door of the dining-room opened, I almost expected to

hear the feeble voice of Master Silence quavering forth his favourite ditty:

> "'Tis merry in hall, when beards wag all,
> And welcome merry Shrove-tide!"

On returning to my inn, I could not but reflect on the singular gift of the poet; to be able thus to spread the magic of his mind over the very face of nature; to give to things and places a charm and character not their own, and to turn this "working-day world" into a perfect fairy land. He is indeed the true enchanter, whose spell operates, not upon the senses, but upon the imagination and the heart. Under the wizard influence of Shakespeare I had been walking all day in a complete delusion. I had surveyed the landscape through the prism of poetry, which tinged every object with the hues of the rainbow. I had been surrounded with fancied beings; with mere airy nothings, conjured up by poetic power; yet which, to me, had all the charm of reality. I had heard Jaques soliloquise beneath his oak; had beheld the fair Rosalind and her companion adventuring through the woodlands; and, above all, had been once more present in spirit with fat Jack Falstaff and his contemporaries, from the august Justice Shallow down to the gentle Master Slender and the sweet Anne Page. Ten thousand honours and blessings on the bard who has thus gilded the dull realities of life with innocent illusions; who has spread exquisite and unbought pleasures in my chequered path; and beguiled my spirit in many a lonely hour, with all the cordial and cheerful sympathies of social life!

As I crossed the bridge over the Avon on my return, I paused to contemplate the distant church in which the poet lies buried, and could not but exult in the malediction, which has kept his ashes undisturbed in its

quiet and hallowed vaults. What honour could his name have derived from being mingled in dusty companionship with the epitaphs and escutcheons and venal eulogiums of a titled multitude? What would a crowded corner in Westminster Abbey have been, compared with this reverend pile, which seems to stand in beautiful loneliness as his sole mausoleum! The solicitude about the grave may be but the offspring of an over-wrought sensibility; but human nature is made up of foibles and prejudices; and its best and tenderest affections are mingled with these factitious feelings. He who has sought renown about the world, and has reaped a full harvest of worldly favour, will find, after all, that there is no love, no admiration, no applause, so sweet to the soul as that which springs up in his native place. It is there that he seeks to be gathered in peace and honour among his kindred and his early friends. And when the weary heart and failing head begin to warn him that the evening of life is drawing on, he turns as fondly as does the infant to the mother's arms to sink to sleep in the bosom of the scene of his childhood.

How would it have cheered the spirit of the youthful bard when, wandering forth in disgrace upon a doubtful world, he cast back a heavy look upon his paternal home, could he have foreseen that, before many years, he should return to it covered with renown; that his name should become the boast and glory of his native place; that his ashes should be religiously guarded as its most precious treasure; and that its lessening spire, on which his eyes were fixed in tearful contemplation, should one day become the beacon, towering amidst the gentle landscape, to guide the literary pilgrim of every nation to his tomb!

—Washington Irving.

VII

SUNDAY AT HOME

EVERY Sabbath morning in the summer time, I thrust back the curtain, to watch the sunrise stealing down a steeple which stands opposite my chamber window. First, the weather-cock begins to flash; then, a fainter lustre gives the spire an airy aspect; next, it encroaches on the tower, and causes the index of the dial to glisten like gold as it points to the gilded figure of the hour. Now, the loftiest window gleams, and now the lower. The carved frame-work of the portal is marked strongly out. At length, the morning glory, in its descent from heaven, comes down the stone steps, one by one; and there stands the steeple, glowing with fresh radiance, while the shades of twilight still hide themselves among the nooks of the adjacent buildings. Methinks, though the same sun brightens it every fair morning, yet the steeple has a peculiar robe of brightness for the Sabbath.

By dwelling near a church, a person soon contracts an attachment for the edifice. We naturally personify it, and conceive its massy walls, and its dim emptiness, to be instinct with a calm, and meditative, and somewhat melancholy spirit. But the steeple stands foremost, in our thoughts, as well as locally. It impresses us as a giant, with a mind comprehensive and discriminating enough to care for the great and small concerns of all the town. Hourly, while it speaks a moral to

the few that think, it reminds thousands of busy individuals of their separate and most secret affairs. It is the steeple, too, that flings abroad the hurried and irregular accents of general alarm; neither have gladness and festivity found a better utterance than by its tongue; and when the dead are slowly passing to their home, the steeple has a melancholy voice to bid them welcome. Yet, in spite of this connection with human interests, what a moral loneliness, on week days, broods round about its stately height! It has no kindred with the houses above which it towers; it looks down into the narrow thoroughfare, the lonelier, because the crowd are elbowing their passage at its base. A glance at the body of the church deepens this impression. Within, by the light of distant windows, amid refracted shadows, we discern the vacant pews and empty galleries, the silent organ, the voiceless pulpit, and the clock, which tells to solitude how time is passing. Time—where man lives not—what is it but eternity? And in the church, we might suppose, are garnered up, throughout the week, all thoughts and feelings that have reference to eternity, until the holy day comes round again, to let them forth. Might not, then, its more appropriate site be in the outskirts of the town, with space for old trees to wave around it, and throw their solemn shadows over a quiet green? We will say more of this, hereafter.

But, on the Sabbath, I watch the earliest sunshine and fancy that a holier brightness marks the day, when there shall be no buzz of voices on the exchange, nor traffic in the shops, nor crowd, nor business, anywhere but at church. Many have fancied so. For my own part, whether I see it scattered down among tangled woods, or beaming broad across the fields, or hemmed in

between brick buildings, or tracing out the figure of the casement on my chamber floor, still I recognise the Sabbath sunshine. And ever let me recognise it! Some illusions, and this among them, are the shadows of great truths. Doubts may flit around me, or seem to close their evil wings, and settle down; but, so long as I imagine that the earth is hallowed, and the light of heaven retains its sanctity, on the Sabbath—while that blessed sunshine lives within me—never can my soul have lost the instinct of its faith. If it have gone astray, it will return again.

I love to spend such pleasant Sabbaths, from morning till night, behind the curtain of my open window. Are they spent amiss? Every spot, so near the church as to be visited by the circling shadow of the steeple, should be deemed consecrated ground, to-day. With stronger truth be it said, that a devout heart may consecrate a den of thieves, as an evil one may convert a temple to the same. My heart, perhaps, has not such holy, nor, I would fain trust, such impious potency. It must suffice, that, though my form be absent, my inner man goes constantly to church, while many, whose bodily presence fills the accustomed seats, have left their souls at home. But I am there, even before my friend, the sexton. At length, he comes—a man of kindly, but sombre aspect, in dark gray clothes, and hair of the same mixture—he comes and applies his key to the wide portal. Now, my thoughts may go in among the dusty pews, or ascend the pulpit, without sacrilege, but soon come forth again to enjoy the music of the bell. How glad, yet solemn too! All the steeples in town are talking together aloft in the sunny air, and rejoicing among themselves, while their spires point heavenward. Meantime, here

are the children assembling to the Sabbath-school, which is kept somewhere within the church. Often, while looking at the arched portal, I have been gladdened by the sight of a score of these little girls and boys, in pink, blue, yellow, and crimson frocks, bursting suddenly forth into the sunshine, like a swarm of gay butterflies that had been shut up in the solemn gloom. Or I might compare them to cherubs, haunting that holy place.

About a quarter of an hour before the second ringing of the bell, individuals of the congregation begin to appear. The earliest is invariably an old woman in black, whose bent frame and rounded shoulders are evidently laden with some heavy affliction, which she is eager to rest upon the altar. Would that the Sabbath came twice as often, for the sake of that sorrowful old soul! There is an elderly man, also, who arrives in good season, and leans against the corner of the tower, just within the line of its shadow, looking downward with a darksome brow. I sometimes fancy that the old woman is the happier of the two. After these, others drop in singly, and by twos and threes, either disappearing through the doorway, or taking their stand in its vicinity. At last, and always with an unexpected sensation, the bell turns in the steeple overhead, and throws out an irregular clangour, jarring the tower to its foundation. As if there were magic in the sound, the sidewalks of the street, both up and down along, are immediately thronged with two long lines of people, all converging hitherward, and streaming into the church. Perhaps the far-off roar of a coach draws nearer—a deeper thunder by its contrast with the surrounding stillness—until it sets down the wealthy worshippers at the portal, among their humblest brethren. Beyond that entrance, in

theory at least, there are no distinctions of earthly rank; nor, indeed, by the goodly apparel which is flaunting in the sun, would there seem to be such, on the hither side. Those pretty girls! Why will they disturb my pious meditation! Of all days in the week, they should strive to look least fascinating on the Sabbath, instead of heightening their mortal loveliness, as if to rival the blessed angels, and keep our thoughts from heaven. Were I the minister himself, I must needs look. One girl is white muslin from the waist upward, and black silk downward to her slippers; a second blushes, from topknot to shoetie, one universal scarlet; another shines of a pervading yellow, as if she had made a garment of the sunshine. The greater part, however, have adopted a milder cheerfulness of hue. Their veils, especially when the wind raises them, give a lightness to the general effect, and make them appear like airy phantoms, as they flit up the steps, and vanish into the sombre doorway. Nearly all—though it is very strange that I should know it—wear white stockings, white as snow, and neat slippers, laced crosswise with black ribbon, pretty high above the ankles. A white stocking is infinitely more effective than a black one.

Here comes the clergyman, slow and solemn, in severe simplicity, needing no black silk gown to denote his office. His aspect claims my reverence, but cannot win my love. Were I to picture Saint Peter keeping fast the gate of heaven, and frowning, more stern than pitiful, on the wretched applicants, that face should be my study. By middle age, or sooner, the creed has generally wrought upon the heart, or been attempered by it. As the minister passes into the church the bell holds its iron tongue, and all the low murmur of the congregation dies away.

The gray sexton looks up and down the street, and then at my window curtain, where, through the small peep-hole, I half fancy that he has caught my eye. Now every loiterer has gone in, and the street lies asleep in the quiet sun, while a feeling of loneliness comes over me, and brings also an uneasy sense of neglected privileges and duties. O, I ought to have gone to church! The bustle of the rising congregation reaches my ears. They are standing up to pray. Could I bring my heart into unison with those who are praying in yonder church, and lift it heavenward, with a fervour of supplication, but no distinct request, would not that be the safest kind of prayer? "Lord, look down upon me in mercy!" With that sentiment gushing from my soul, might I not leave all the rest to Him?

Hark! the hymn. This, at least, is a portion of the service which I can enjoy better than if I sat within the walls, where the full choir and the massive melody of the organ would fall with a weight upon me. At this distance it thrills through my frame and plays upon my heart-strings with a pleasure both of the sense and spirit. Heaven be praised, I know nothing of music as a science; and the most elaborate harmonies, if they please me, please as simply as a nurse's lullaby. The strain has ceased, but prolongs itself in my mind with fanciful echoes till I start from my reverie, and find that the sermon has commenced. It is my misfortune seldom to fructify, in a regular way, by any but printed sermons. The first strong idea which the preacher utters gives birth to a train of thought, and leads me onward, step by step, quite out of hearing of the good man's voice, unless he be indeed a son of thunder. At my open window, catching now and then a sentence of the "parson's saw," I am as

well situated as at the foot of the pulpit stairs. The broken and scattered fragments of this one discourse will be the texts of many sermons, preached by those colleague pastors—colleagues, but often disputants—my Mind and Heart. The former pretends to be a scholar, and perplexes me with doctrinal points; the latter takes me on the score of feeling; and both, like several other preachers, spend their strength to very little purpose. I, their sole auditor, cannot always understand them.

Suppose that a few hours have passed, and behold me still behind my curtain, just before the close of the afternoon service. The hour hand on the dial has passed beyond four o'clock. The declining sun is hidden behind the steeple, and throws its shadow straight across the street, so that my chamber is darkened as with a cloud. Around the church-door all is solitude, and an impenetrable obscurity beyond the threshold. A commotion is heard. The seats are slammed down, and the pew-doors thrown back—a multitude of feet are trampling along the unseen aisles—and the congregation bursts suddenly through the portal. Foremost scampers a rabble of boys, behind whom moves a dense and dark phalanx of grown men, and lastly, a crowd of females, with young children, and a few scattered husbands. This instantaneous outbreak of life into loneliness is one of the pleasantest scenes of the day. Some of the good people are rubbing their eyes, thereby intimating that they have been wrapped, as it were, in a sort of holy trance by the fervour of their devotion. There is a young man, a third-rate coxcomb, whose first care is always to flourish a white handkerchief, and brush the seat of a tight pair of black silk pantaloons, which shine as if

varnished. They must have been made of the stuff called "everlasting," or perhaps of the same piece as Christian's garments in the "Pilgrim's Progress," for he put them on two summers ago, and has not yet worn the gloss off. I have taken a great liking to those black silk pantaloons. But now, with nods and greetings among friends, each matron takes her husband's arm and paces gravely homeward, while the girls also flutter away after arranging sunset walks with their favoured bachelors. The Sabbath eve is the eve of love. At length the whole congregation is dispersed. No; here, with faces as glossy as black satin, come two sable ladies and a sable gentleman, and close in their rear the minister, who softens his severe visage, and bestows a kind word on each. Poor souls! To them the most captivating picture of bliss in heaven is—"There we shall be white!"

All is solitude again. But, hark!—a broken warbling of voices, and now, attuning its grandeur to their sweetness, a stately peal of the organ. Who are the choristers? Let me dream that the angels, who came down from heaven, this blessed morn, to blend themselves with the worship of the truly good, are playing and singing their farewell to the earth. On the wings of that rich melody they were borne upward.

This, gentle reader, is merely a flight of poetry. A few of the singing men and singing women had lingered behind their fellows, and raised their voices fitfully, and blew a careless note upon the organ. Yet, it lifted my soul higher than all their former strains. They are gone—the sons and daughters of music—and the gray sexton is just closing the portal. For six days more, there will be no face of man in the pews, and aisles, and galleries, nor a voice in the pulpit, nor music in the choir.

Was it worth while to rear this massive edifice, to be a desert in the heart of the town, and populous only for a few hours of each seventh day? Oh, but the church is a symbol of religion. May its site, which was consecrated on the day when the first tree was felled, be kept holy forever, a spot of solitude and peace, amid the trouble and vanity of our week-day world! There is a moral, and a religion too, even in the silent walls. And may the steeple still point heavenward, and be decked with the hallowed sunshine of the Sabbath morn!

—NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE.

VIII

THE OLD APPLE DEALER

THE lover of the moral picturesque may sometimes find what he seeks in a character which is nevertheless of too negative a description to be seized upon and represented to the imaginative vision by word painting. As an instance, I remember an old man who carries on a little trade of gingerbread and apples at the depot of one of our railroads. While awaiting the departure of the cars, my observation, flitting to and fro among the livelier characteristics of the scene, has often settled insensibly upon this almost hueless object. Thus, unconsciously to myself and unsuspected by him, I have studied the old apple dealer until he has become a naturalised citizen of my inner world. How little would he imagine—poor, neglected, friendless, unappreciated, and with little that demands appreciation—that the mental eye of an utter stranger has so often reverted to his figure! Many a noble form, many a beautiful face, has flitted before me and vanished like a shadow. It is a strange witchcraft whereby this faded and featureless old apple dealer has gained a settlement in my memory.

He is a small man, with gray hair and gray stubble beard, and is invariably clad in a shabby surtout of snuff colour, closely buttoned, and half concealing a pair of gray pantaloons; the whole dress, though clean and entire, being evidently flimsy with much wear. His face, thin, withered, furrowed, and with features which

even age has failed to render impressive, has a frost-bitten aspect. It is a moral frost which no physical warmth or comfortableness could counteract. The summer sunshine may fling its white heat upon him, or the good fire of the depot room may make him the focus of its blaze on a winter's day; but all in vain; for still the old man looks as if he were in a frosty atmosphere, with scarcely warmth enough to keep life in the region about his heart. It is a patient, long-suffering, quiet, hopeless, shivering aspect. He is not desperate—that, though 'ts etymology implies no more, would be too positive an expression—but merely devoid of hope. As all his past life, probably, offers no spots of brightness to his memory, so he takes his present poverty and discomfort as entirely a matter of course: he thinks it the definition of existence, so far as himself is concerned, to be poor, cold, and uncomfortable. It may be added, that time has not thrown dignity as a mantle over the old man's figure: there is nothing venerable about him: you pity him without a scruple.

He sits on a bench in the depot room; and before him, on the floor, are deposited two baskets of a capacity to contain his whole stock in trade. Across from one basket to the other extends a board, on which is displayed a plate of cakes and gingerbread, some russet and red-cheeked apples, and a box containing variegated sticks of candy, together with that delectable condiment known by children as Gibraltar rock, neatly done up in white paper. There is likewise a half-peck measure of cracked walnuts and two or three tin half pints or gills filled with the nut kernels, ready for purchasers. Such are the small commodities with which our old friend comes daily before the world, ministering to its petty needs and little

freaks of appetite, and seeking thence the solid subsistence —so far as he may subsist—of his life.

A slight observer would speak of the old man's quietude; but, on closer scrutiny, you discover that there is a continual unrest within him, which somewhat resembles the fluttering action of the nerves in a corpse from which life has recently departed. Though he never exhibits any violent action, and, indeed, might appear to be sitting quite still, yet you perceive, when his minuter peculiarities begin to be detected, that he is always making some little movement or other. He looks anxiously at this plate of cakes or pyramid of apples, and slightly alters their arrangement, with an evident idea that a great deal depends on their being disposed exactly thus and so. Then for a moment he gazes out of the window; then he shivers quietly and folds his arms across his breast, as if to draw himself closer within himself, and thus keep a flicker of warmth in his lonesome heart. Now he turns again to his merchandise of cakes, apples and candy, and discovers that this cake or that apple, or yonder stick of red and white candy, has somehow got out of its proper position. And is there not a walnut kernel too many or too few in one of those small tin measures? Again the whole arrangement appears to be settled to his mind; but, in the course of a minute or two, there will assuredly be something to set right. At times, by an indescribable shadow upon his features, too quiet, however, to be noticed until you are familiar with his ordinary aspect, the expression of frost-bitten, patient despondency becomes very touching. It seems as if just at that instant the suspicion occurred to him that, in his chill decline of life, earning scanty bread

by selling cakes, apples, and candy, he is a very miserable old fellow.

But, if he think so, it is a mistake. He can never suffer the extreme of misery, because the tone of his whole being is too much subdued for him to feel anything acutely.

Occasionally one of the passengers, to while away a tedious interval, approaches the old man, inspects the articles upon his board, and even peeps curiously into the two baskets. Another, striding to and fro along the room, throws a look at the apples and gingerbread at every turn. A third, it may be of a more sensitive and delicate texture of being, glances shyly thitherward, cautious not to excite expectations of a purchaser while yet undetermined whether to buy. But there appears to be no need of such a scrupulous regard to our old friend's feelings. True, he is conscious of the remote possibility to sell a cake or an apple; but innumerable disappointments have rendered him so far a philosopher that, even if the purchased article should be returned, he will consider it altogether in the ordinary train of events. He speaks to none, and makes no sign of offering his wares to the public: not that he is deterred by pride, but by the certain conviction that such demonstrations would not increase his custom. Besides, this activity in business would require an energy that never could have been a characteristic of his almost passive disposition even in youth. Whenever an actual customer appears the old man looks up with a patient eye: if the price and the article are approved, he is ready to make change; otherwise his eyelids droop again sadly enough, but with no heavier despondency than before. He shivers, perhaps folds his lean arms around his lean body, and resumes the

lifelong, frozen patience in which consists his strength. Once in a while a schoolboy comes hastily up, places a cent or two upon the board, and takes up a cake, or stick of candy, or a measure of walnuts, or an apple as red cheeked as himself. There are no words as to price, that being as well known to the buyer as to the seller. The old apple dealer never speaks an unnecessary word: not that he is sullen and morose; but there is none of the cheeriness and briskness in him that stirs up people to talk.

Not seldom he is greeted by some old neighbour, a man well to do in the world, who makes a civil, patronising observation about the weather; and then, by way of performing a charitable deed, begins to chaffer for an apple. Our friend presumes not on any past acquaintance; he makes the briefest possible response to all general remarks, and shrinks quietly into himself again. After every diminution of his stock he takes care to produce from the basket another cake, another stick of candy, another apple, or another measure of walnuts, to supply the place of the article sold. Two or three attempts—or, perchance, half a dozen—are requisite before the board can be rearranged to his satisfaction. If he have received a silver coin, he waits till the purchaser is out of sight, then he examines it closely, and tries to bend it with his finger and thumb: finally he puts it into his waistcoat pocket with seemingly a gentle sigh. This sigh, so faint as to be hardly perceptible, and not expressive of any definite emotion, is the accompaniment and conclusion of all his actions. It is the symbol of the chillness and torpid melancholy of his old age, which only make themselves felt sensibly when his repose is slightly disturbed.

Our man of gingerbread and apples is not a specimen of the "needy man who has seen better days." Doubtless there have been better and brighter days in the far-off time of his youth; but none with so much sunshine of prosperity in them that the chill, the depression, the narrowness of means, in his declining years, can have come upon him by surprise. His life has all been of a piece. His subdued and nerveless boyhood prefigured his abortive prime, which likewise contained within itself the prophecy and image of his lean and torpid age. He was perhaps a mechanic, who never came to be a master in his craft, or a petty tradesman, rubbing onward between passably to do and poverty. Possibly he may look back to some brilliant epoch of his career when there were a hundred or two of dollars to his credit in the Savings Bank. Such must have been the extent of his better fortune—his little measure of this world's triumphs —all that he has known of success. A meek, downcast, humble, uncomplaining creature, he probably has never felt himself entitled to more than so much of the gifts of Providence. Is it not still something that he has never held out his hand for charity, nor has yet been driven to that sad home and household of Earth's forlorn and broken-spirited children, the almshouse? He cherishes no quarrel, therefore, with his destiny, nor with the Author of it. All is as it should be.

If, indeed, he have been bereaved of a son, a bold, energetic, vigorous young man, on whom the father's feeble nature leaned as on a staff of strength, in that case he may have felt a bitterness that could not otherwise have generated in his heart. But methinks the joy of possessing such a son and the agony of losing him would have developed the old man's moral and intellectual nature

to a much greater degree than we now find it. Intense grief appears to be as much out of keeping with his life as fervid happiness.

To confess the truth, it is not the easiest matter in the world to define and individualise a character like this which we are now handling. The portrait must be so generally negative that the most delicate pencil is likely to spoil it by introducing some too positive tint. Every touch must be kept down, or else you destroy the subdued tone which is absolutely essential to the whole effect. Perhaps more may be done by contrast than by direct description. For this purpose I make use of another cake and candy merchant, who likewise infests the railroad depot. This latter worthy is a very smart and well-dressed boy of ten years old or thereabouts, who skips briskly hither and thither, addressing the passengers in a pert voice, yet with somewhat of good breeding in his tone and pronunciation. Now he has caught my eye, and skips across the room with a pretty pertness which I should like to correct with a box on the ear. "Any cake, sir? any candy?"

No, none for me, my lad. I did but glance at your brisk figure in order to catch a reflected light and throw it upon your old rival yonder.

Again, in order to invest my conception of the old man with a more decided sense of reality, I look at him in the very moment of intensest bustle, on the arrival of the cars. The shriek of the engine as it rushes into the car-house is the utterance of the steam fiend, whom man has subdued by magic spells and compels to serve as a beast of burden. He has skimmed rivers in his headlong rush, dashed through forests, plunged into the hearts of mountains, and glanced from the city to the

desert-place, and again to a far-off city, with a meteoric progress, seen and out of sight, while his reverberating roar still fills the ear. The travellers swarm forth from the cars. All are full of the momentum which they have caught from their mode of conveyance. It seems as if the whole world, both morally and physically, were detached from its old standfasts and set in rapid motion. And, in the midst of this terrible activity, there sits the old man of gingerbread; so subdued, so hopeless, so without a stake in life, and yet not positively miserable—there he sits, the forlorn old creature, one chill and sombre day after another, gathering scanty coppers for his cakes, apples, and candy—there sits the old apple dealer, in his threadbare suit of snuff colour and gray and his grizzly stubble beard. See! he folds his lean arms around his lean figure with that quiet sigh and that scarcely perceptible shiver which are the tokens of his inward state. I have him now. He and the steam fiend are each other's antipodes; the latter 's the type of all that go ahead, and the old man the representative of that melancholy class who, by some sad witchcraft, are doomed never to share in the world's exulting progress. Thus the contrast between mankind and this desolate brother becomes picturesque, and even sublime.

And now farewell, old friend! Little do you suspect that a student of human life has made your character the theme of more than one solitary and thoughtful hour. Many would say that you have hardly individuality enough to be the object of your own self-love. How, then, can a stranger's eye detect anything in your mind and heart to study and to wonder at? Yet, could I read but a tithe of what is written there, it would be a volume of deeper and more comprehensive import than all

the wisest mortals have given to the world; for the soundless depths of the human soul and of eternity have an opening through your breast. God be praised, were it only for your sake that the present shapes of human existence are not cast in iron nor hewn in everlasting adamant, but moulded of the vapours that vanish away while the essence flits upward to the Infinite. There is a spiritual essence in this gray and lean old shape that shall flit upward too. Yes; doubtless there is a region where the lifelong shiver will pass away from his being, and that quiet sigh, which it has taken him so many years to breathe, will be brought to a close for good and all.

—Nathaniel Hawthorne.

IX

REVOLT OF THE TARTARS

THERE is no great event in modern history, or, perhaps it may be said more broadly, none in all history, from its earliest records, less generally known, or more striking to the imagination, than the flight eastwards of a principal Tartar nation across the boundless *steppes* of Asia in the latter half of the last century. The *terminus a quo* of this flight and the *terminus ad quem* are equally magnificent; the mightiest of Christian thrones being the one, the mightiest of Pagan the other. And the grandeur of these two terminal objects is harmoniously supported by the romantic circumstances of the flight. In the abruptness of its commencement, and the fierce velocity of its execution, we read an expression of the wild barbaric character of those who conducted the movement. In the unity of purpose connecting this myriad of wills, and in the blind but unerring aim at a mark so remote, there is something which recalls to the mind those almighty instincts that propel the migrations of the swallow and the leeming, or the life-withering marches of the locust. Then, again, in the gloomy vengeance of Russia and her vast artillery, which hung upon the rear and the skirts of the fugitive vassals, we are reminded of Miltonic images—such, for instance, as that of the solitary hand pursuing through desert spaces and through ancient chaos a rebellious host, and overtaking with volleying thunders those who believed

themselves already within the security of darkness and of distance.

I shall have occasion, farther on, to compare this event with other great national catastrophes as to the magnitude of the suffering. But it may also challenge a comparison with similar events under another relation, viz., as to its dramatic capabilities. Few cases, perhaps, in romance or history, can sustain a close collation with this as to the *complexity* of its separate interests. The great outline of the enterprise, taken in connection with the operative motives, hidden or avowed, and the religious sanctions under which it was pursued, give to the case a triple character: 1st, that of a *conspiracy*, with as close a unity in the incidents, and as much of a personal interest in the moving characters, with fine dramatic contrasts, as belongs to "Venice Preserved," or to the "Fiesco" of Schiller; 2dly, that of a great *military expedition*, offering the same romantic features of vast distances to be traversed, vast reverses to be sustained, untried routes, enemies obscurely ascertained, and hardships too vaguely prefigured, which mark the Egyptian expedition of Cambyses—which mark the anabasis of the younger Cyrus, and the subsequent retreat of the ten thousand—which mark the Parthian expeditions of the Romans, especially those of Crassus and Julian—or (as more disastrous than any of them, and, in point of space as well as in amount of forces, more extensive) the Russian anabasis and katabasis of Napoleon; 3dly, by that of a religious *Exodus*, authorised by an oracle venerated throughout many nations of Asia—an Exodus, therefore, in so far resembling the great Scriptural Exodus of the Israelites, under Moses and Joshua, as well as in the very peculiar distinction of carrying along with them

their entire families, women, children, slaves, their herds of cattle and of sheep, their horses and their camels.

This triple character of the enterprise naturally invests it with a more comprehensive interest. But the dramatic interest which I have ascribed to it, or its fitness for a stage representation, depends partly upon the marked variety and the strength of the personal agencies concerned, and partly upon the succession of scenical situations. Even the *steppes*, the camels, the tents, the snowy and the sandy deserts, are not beyond the scale of our modern representative powers, as often called into action in the theatres both of Paris and London; and the series of situations unfolded—beginning with the general conflagration on the Wolga—passing thence to the disastrous scenes of the flight (as it *literally* was in its commencement)—to the Tartar siege of the Russian fortress Koulagina—the bloody engagement with the Cossacks in the mountain passes at Ouchim—the surprisal by the Bashkirs, and the advanced posts of the Russian army at Torgau—the private conspiracy at this point against the Khan—the long succession of running fights—the parting massacres at the Lake of Tengis under the eyes of the Chinese—and, finally, the tragical retribution to Zebek-Dorchi at the hunting lodge of the Chinese Emperor;—all these situations communicate a *scenical* animation to the wild romance, if treated dramatically; whilst a higher and a philosophic interest belongs to it as a case of authentic history, commemorating a great revolution for good and for evil in the fortunes of a whole people—a people semi-barbarous, but simple hearted, and of ancient descent.

On the 21st of January, 1761, the young Prince Oubacha assumed the sceptre of the Kalmucks upon

the death of his father. Some part of the power attached to this dignity he had already wielded since his fourteenth year, in quality of Vice-Khan, by the express appointment and with the avowed support of the Russian Government. He was now about eighteen years of age, amiable in his personal character, and not without titles to respect in his public character as a sovereign prince. In times more peaceable, and amongst a people more entirely civilised, or more humanised by religion, it is even probable that he might have discharged his high duties with considerable distinction. But his lot was thrown upon stormy times, and a most difficult crisis amongst tribes whose native ferocity was exasperated by debasing forms of superstition, and by a nationality as well as an inflated conceit of their own merit absolutely unparalleled, whilst the circumstances of their hard and trying position under the jealous *surveillance* of an irresistible lord paramount, in the person of the Russian Czar, gave a fiercer edge to the natural unamiableness of the Kalmuck disposition, and irritated its gloomier qualities into action under the restless impulses of suspicion and permanent distrust. No prince could hope for a cordial allegiance from his subjects or a peaceful reign under the circumstances of the case; for the dilemma in which a Kalmuck ruler stood at present was of this nature: *wanting* the sanction and support of the Czar, he was inevitably too weak from without to command confidence from his subjects, or resistance to his competitors; on the other hand, *with* this kind of support, and deriving his title in any degree from the favour of the Imperial Court, he became almost in that extent an object of hatred at home, and within the whole compass of his own territory. He was at once an object of

hatred for the past, being a living monument of national independence ignominiously surrendered, and an object of jealousy for the future, as one who had already advertised himself to be a fitting tool for the ultimate purposes (whatsoever those might prove to be) of the Russian Court. Coming himself to the Kalmuck sceptre under the heaviest weight of prejudice from the unfortunate circumstances of his position, it might have been expected that Oubacha would have been pre-eminently an object of detestation; for, besides his known dependence upon the Cabinet of St. Petersburg, the direct line of succession had been set aside, and the principle of inheritance violently suspended, in favour of his own father, so recently as nineteen years before the era of his own accession, consequently within the lively remembrance of the existing generation. He therefore, almost equally with his father, stood within the full current of the national prejudices, and might have anticipated the most pointed hostility. But it was not so: such are the caprices in human affairs that he was even, in a moderate sense, popular—a benefit which wore the more cheering aspect, and the promises of permanence, inasmuch as he owed it exclusively to his personal qualities of kindness and affability, as well as to the beneficence of his government. On the other hand, to balance this unlooked-for prosperity at the outset of his reign, he met with a rival in popular favour—almost a competitor—in the person of Zebek-Dorchi, a prince with considerable pretensions to the throne, and perhaps, it might be said, with equal pretensions. Zebek-Dorchi was a direct descendant of the same royal house as himself, through a different branch. On public grounds, his claim stood, perhaps, on a footing equally good with that of Oubacha, whilst

his personal qualities, even in those aspects which seemed to a philosophical observer most odious and repulsive, promised the most effectual aid to the dark purposes of an intriguer or a conspirator, and were generally fitted to win a popular support precisely in those points where Oubacha was most defective. He was much superior in external appearance to his rival on the throne, and so far better qualified to win the good opinion of a semi-barbarous people; whilst his dark intellectual qualities of Machiavelian dissimulation, profound hypocrisy, and perfidy which knew no touch of remorse, were admirably calculated to sustain any ground which he might win from the simple-hearted people with whom he had to deal, and from the frank carelessness of his unconscious competitor.

At the very outset of his treacherous career, Zebek-Dorchi was sagacious enough to perceive that nothing could be gained by open declaration of hostility to the reigning prince: the choice had been a deliberate act on the part of Russia, and Elizabeth Petrowna was not the person to recall her own favours with levity or upon slight grounds. Openly, therefore, to have declared his enmity towards his relative on the throne could have had no effect but that of arming suspicions against his own ulterior purposes in a quarter where it was most essential to his interest that, for the present, all suspicion should be hoodwinked. Accordingly, after much meditation, the course he took for opening his snares was this:— He raised a rumour that his own life was in danger from the plots of several Saissang (that is, Kalmuck nobles), who were leagued together, under an oath, to assassinate him; and immediately after, assuming a well-counterfeited alarm, he fled to Tcherkask, followed by sixty-five

tents. From this place he kept up a correspondence with the Imperial Court; and, by way of soliciting his cause more effectually, he soon repaired in person to St. Petersburg. Once admitted to personal conferences with the cabinet, he found no difficulty in winning over the Russian counsels to a concurrence with some of his political views, and thus covertly introducing the point of that wedge which was finally to accomplish his purposes. In particular, he persuaded the Russian government to make a very important alteration in the constitution of the Kalmuck State Council, which in effect reorganised the whole political condition of the state, and disturbed the balance of power as previously adjusted. Of this council—in the Kalmuck language called Sarga—there were eight members, called Sargatchi; and hitherto it had been the custom that these eight members should be entirely subordinate to the Khan; holding, in fact, the ministerial character of secretaries and assistants, but in no respect ranking as co-ordinate authorities. That had produced some inconveniences in former reigns; and it was easy for Zebek-Dorchi to point the jealousy of the Russian Court to others more serious which might arise in future circumstances of war or other contingencies. It was resolved, therefore, to place the Sargatchi henceforward on a footing of perfect independence, and therefore (as regarded responsibility) on a footing of equality with the Khan. Their independence, however, had respect only to their own sovereign; for toward Russia they were placed in a new attitude of direct duty and accountability by the creation in their favour of small pensions (300 roubles a year) which, however, to a Kalmuck of that day were more considerable than might be supposed, and had a farther value as

marks of honorary distinction emanating from a great empress. Thus far the purposes of Zebek-Dorchi were served effectually for the moment: but, apparently, it was only for the moment; since, in the further development of his plots, this very dependency upon Russian influence would be the most serious obstacle in his way. There was, however, another point carried which outweighed all inferior considerations, as it gave him a power of setting aside discretionally whatsoever should arise to disturb his plots: he was himself appointed President and Controller of the Sargatchi. The Russian Court had been aware of his high pretensions by birth, and hoped by this promotion to satisfy the ambition which, in some degree, was acknowledged to be a reasonable passion for any man occupying his situation.

Having thus completely blindfolded the cabinet of Russia, Zebek-Dorchi proceeded in his new character to fulfil his political mission with the Khan of the Kalmucks. So artfully did he prepare the road for his favourable reception at the court of this prince that he was at once and universally welcomed as a benefactor. The pensions of the councillors were so much additional wealth poured into the Tartar exchequer; as to the ties of dependency thus created, experience had not yet enlightened these simple tribes as to that result. And that he himself should be the chief of these mercenary councillors was so far from being charged upon Zebek as any offence or any ground of suspicion, that his relative the Khan returned him hearty thanks for his services, under the belief that he could have accepted this appointment only with a view to keep out other and more unwelcome pretenders, who would not have had the same motives of consanguinity or friendship for executing its

duties in a spirit of kindness to the Kalmucks. The first use which he made of his new functions about the Khan's person was to attack the Court of Russia, by a romantic villainy not easily to be credited, for those very acts of interference with the council which he himself had prompted. This was a dangerous step: but it was indispensable to his farther advance upon the gloomy path which he had traced out for himself. A triple vengeance was what he meditated: 1, upon the Russian cabinet, for having undervalued his own pretensions to the throne; 2, upon his amiable rival, for having supplanted him; and, 3, upon all those of the nobility who had manifested their sense of his weakness by their neglect, or their sense of his perfidious character by their suspicions. Here was a colossal outline of wickedness; and by one in his situation, feeble (as it might seem) of the accomplishment of its humblest parts, how was the total edifice to be reared in its comprehensive grandeur? He, a worm as he was, could he venture to assail the mighty behemoth of Muscovy, the potentate who counted three hundred languages around the footsteps of his throne, and from whose "lion ramp" recoiled alike "baptised and infidel"—Christendom on the one side, strong by her intellect and her organisation, and the "Barbaric East" on the other, with her unnumbered numbers? The match was a monstrous one; but in its very monstrosity there lay this germ of encouragement, that it could not be suspected. The very hopelessness of the scheme grounded his hope, and he resolved to execute a vengeance which should involve, as it were, in the unity of a well-laid tragic fable, all whom he judged to be his enemies. That vengeance lay in detaching from the Russian Empire the whole Kalmuck

nation, and breaking up that system of intercourse which had thus far been beneficial to both. This last was a consideration which moved him but little. True it was that Russia, to the Kalmucks, had secured lands and extensive pasturage; true it was, that the Kalmucks reciprocally to Russia had furnished a powerful cavalry. But the latter loss would be part of his triumph, and the former might be more than compensated in other climates under other sovereigns. Here was a scheme which, in its final accomplishment, would avenge him bitterly on the Czarina, and in the course of its accomplishment might furnish him with ample occasions for removing his other enemies. It may be readily supposed, indeed, but he who could deliberately raise his eyes to the Russian autocrat as an antagonist in single duel with himself was not likely to feel much anxiety about Kalmuck enemies of whatever rank. He took his resolution, therefore, sternly and irrevocably to effect this astonishing translation of an ancient people across the pathless deserts of Central Asia, intersected continually by rapid rivers, rarely furnished with bridges, and of which the fords were known only to those who might think it for their interest to conceal them, through many nations inhospitable or hostile; frost and snow around them (from the necessity of commencing their flight in the winter), famine in their front, and the sabre, or even the artillery of an offended and mighty empress, hanging upon their rear for thousands of miles. But what was to be their final mark—the port of shelter after so fearful a course of wandering? Two things were evident: it must be some power at a great distance from Russia, so as to make return even in that view hopeless; and it must be a power of sufficient rank to insure them protection

from any hostile efforts on the part of the Czarina for reclaiming them, or for chastising their revolt. Both conditions were united obviously in the person of Kien Long, the reigning Emperor of China, who was further recommended to them by his respect for the head of their religion. To China, therefore, and, as their first rendezvous, to the shadow of the great Chinese Wall, it was settled by Zebek that they should direct their flight.

Next came the question of time—*when* should the flight commence? and, finally, the more delicate question as to the choice of accomplices. To extend the knowledge of the conspiracy too far was to insure its betrayal to the Russian Government. Yet, at some stage of the preparations, it was evident that a very extensive confidence must be made, because in no other way could the mass of the Kalmuck population be persuaded to furnish their families with the requisite equipments for so long a migration. This critical step, however, it was resolved to defer up to the latest possible moment, and, at all events, to make no general communication on the subject until the time of departure should be definitely settled. In the meantime, Zebek admitted only three persons to his confidence; of whom Oubacha, the reigning prince, was almost necessarily one; but him, from his yielding and somewhat feeble character, he viewed rather in the light of a tool than as one of his active accomplices. Those whom (if anybody) he admitted to an unreserved participation in his counsels were two only: the great Lama among the Kalmucks, and his own father-in-law, Erempel, a ruling prince of some tribe in the neighbourhood of the Caspian Sea, recommended to his favour not so much by any strength of talent corresponding to the occasion as by his blind

devotion to himself and his passionate anxiety to promote the elevation of his daughter and his son-in-law to the throne of a sovereign prince. A titular prince Zebek already was: but this dignity, without the substantial accompaniment of a sceptre, seemed but an empty sound to both of these ambitious rebels. The other accomplice, whose name was Loosan-Dchaltzan, and whose rank was that of Lama, or Kalmuck pontiff, was a person of far more distinguished pretensions; he had something of the same gloomy and terrific pride which marked the character of Zebek himself, manifesting also the same energy, accompanied by the same unfaltering cruelty, and a natural facility of dissimulation even more profound. It was by this man that the other question was settled, as to the time for giving effect to their designs. His own pontifical character had suggested to him that, in order to strengthen their influence with the vast mob of simple-minded men whom they were to lead into a howling wilderness, after persuading them to lay desolate their own ancient hearths, it was indispensable that they should be able, in cases of extremity, to plead the express sanction of God for their entire enterprise. This could only be done by addressing themselves to the great head of their religion, the Dalai-Lama of Tibet. Him they easily persuaded to countenance their schemes: and an oracle was delivered solemnly at Tibet, to the effect that no ultimate prosperity would attend this great Exodus unless it were pursued through the years of the *tiger* and the *hare*. Now, the Kalmuck custom is to distinguish their years by attaching to each denomination taken from one of twelve animals, the exact order of succession being absolutely fixed, so that the cycle revolves of course through a period of a dozen

years. Consequently, if the approaching year of the *tiger* were suffered to escape them, in that case the expedition must be delayed for twelve years more; within which period, even were no other unfavourable changes to arise, it was pretty well foreseen that the Russian Government would take the most effectual means for bridling their vagrant propensities by a ring-fence of forts or military posts; to say nothing of the still readier plan for securing their fidelity (a plan already talked of in all quarters) by exacting a large body of hostages selected from the families of the most influential nobles. On these cogent considerations, it was solemnly determined that this terrific experiment should be made in the next year of the *tiger*, which happened to fall upon the Christian year 1771. With respect to the month, there was, unhappily for the Kalmucks, even less latitude allowed to their choice than with respect to the year. It was absolutely necessary, or it was thought so, that the different divisions of the nation which pastured their flocks on both banks of the Wolga should have the means of effecting an instantaneous junction; because the danger of being intercepted by flying columns of the imperial armies was precisely the greatest at the outset. Now, from the want of bridges, or sufficient river craft for transporting so vast a body of men, the sole means which could be depended upon (especially where so many women, children, and camels were concerned) was *ice:* and this, in a state of sufficient firmness, could not be absolutely counted upon before the month of January. Hence it happened that this astonishing Exodus of a whole nation, before so much as a whisper of the design had begun to circulate amongst those whom it most interested, before it was even suspected that any

man's wishes pointed in that direction, had been definitely appointed for January of the year 1771. And almost up to the Christmas of 1770 the poor simple Kalmuck herdsmen and their families were going nightly to their peaceful beds, without even dreaming that the *fiat* had already gone forth from their rulers which consigned those quiet abodes, together with the peace and comfort which reigned within them, to a withering desolation, now close at hand.

Meantime war raged on a great scale between Russia and the Sultan; and, until the time arrived for throwing off their vassalage, it was necessary that Oubacha should contribute his usual contingent of martial aid. Nay, it had unfortunately become prudent that he should contribute much more than his usual aid. Human experience gives ample evidence that in some mysterious and unaccountable way no great design is ever agitated, no matter how few or how faithful may be the participators, but that some presentiment—some dim misgiving—is kindled amongst those whom it is chiefly important to blind. And, however it might have happened, certain it is that already, when as yet no syllable of the conspiracy had been breathed to any man whose very existence was not staked upon its concealment, nevertheless, some vague and uneasy jealousy had arisen in the Russian Cabinet as to the future schemes of the Kalmuck Khan: and very probable it is that, but for the war then raging, and the consequent prudence of conciliating a very important vassal, or, at least, of abstaining from what would powerfully alienate him, even at that moment such measures would have been adopted as must forever have intercepted the Kalmuck schemes. Slight as were the jealousies of the Imperial Court, they had not

escaped the Machiavelian eyes of Zebek and the Lama. And under their guidance Oubacha, bending to the circumstances of the moment, and meeting the jealousy of the Russian Court with a policy corresponding to their own, strove by unusual zeal to efface the Czarina's unfavourable impressions. He enlarged the scale of his contributions, and *that* so prodigiously that he absolutely carried to headquarters a force of 35,000 cavalry fully equipped: some go further, and rate the amount beyond 40,000; but the smaller estimate is, at all events, *within* the truth.

With this magnificent array of cavalry, heavy as well as light, the Khan went into the field under great expectations; and these he more than realised. Having the good fortune to be concerned with so ill-organised and disorderly a description of force as that which at all times composed the bulk of a Turkish army, he carried victory along with his banners; gained many partial successes; and at last, in a pitched battle overthrew the Turkish force opposed to him with a loss of 5,000 men left upon the field.

These splendid achievements seemed likely to operate in various ways against the impending revolt. Oubacha had now a strong motive, in the martial glory acquired, for continuing his connection with the empire in whose service he had won it, and by whom only it could be fully appreciated. He was now a great marshal of a great empire, one of the Paladins around the imperial throne; in China he would be nobody, or (worse than that) a mendicant alien, prostrate at the feet, and soliciting the precarious alms, of a prince with whom he had no connection. Besides, it might reasonably be expected that the Czarina, grateful for the really efficient aid given by

the Tartar prince, would confer upon him such eminent rewards as might be sufficient to anchor his hopes upon Russia, and to wean him from every possible seduction. These were the obvious suggestions of prudence and good sense to every man who stood neutral in the case. But they were disappointed. The Czarina knew her obligations to the Khan, but she did not acknowledge them. Wherefore? That is a mystery, perhaps never to be explained. So it was, however. The Khan went unhonoured; no *ukase* ever proclaimed his merits; and perhaps, had he even been abundantly recompensed by Russia, there were others who would have defeated these tendencies to reconciliation. Erempel, Zebek, and Loosang the Lama, were pledged life-deep to prevent any accommodation; and their efforts were unfortunately seconded by those of their deadliest enemies. In the Russian Court there were at that time some great nobles preoccupied with feelings of hatred and blind malice toward the Kalmucks, quite as strong as any which the Kalmucks could harbour toward Russia, and not, perhaps, so well founded. Just as much as the Kalmucks hated the Russian yoke, their galling assumption of authority, the marked air of disdain, as towards a nation of ugly, stupid, and filthy barbarians, which too generally marked the Russian bearing and language, but, above all, the insolent contempt, or even outrages, which the Russian governors or great military commandants tolerated in their followers toward the barbarous religion and superstitious mummeries of the Kalmuck priesthood—precisely in that extent did the ferocity of the Russian resentment, and their wrath at seeing the trampled worm turn or attempt a feeble retaliation, react upon the unfortunate Kalmucks. At this

crisis, it is probable that envy and wounded pride, upon witnessing the splendid victories of Oubacha and Momotbacha over the Turks and Bashkirs, contributed strength to the Russian irritation. And it must have been through the intrigues of those nobles about her person who chiefly smarted under these feelings that the Czarina could ever have lent herself to the unwise and ungrateful policy pursued at this critical period toward the Kalmuck Khan. That Czarina was no longer Elizabeth Petrowna; it was Catherine II—a princess who did not often err so injuriously (injuriously for herself as much as for others) in the measures of her government. She had soon ample reason for repenting of her false policy. Meantime, how much it must have cooperated with the other motives previously acting upon Oubacha in sustaining his determination to revolt, and how powerfully it must have assisted the efforts of all the Tartar chieftains in preparing the minds of their people to feel the necessity of this difficult enterprise, by arming their pride and their suspicions against the Russian government, through the keenness of their sympathy with the wrongs of their insulted prince, may readily be imagined. It is a fact, and it has been confessed by candid Russians themselves, when treating of this great dismemberment, that the conduct of the Russian Cabinet throughout the period of suspense and during the crisis of hesitation in the Kalmuck Council was exactly such as was most desirable for the purposes of the conspirators; it was such, in fact, as to set the seal to all their machinations, by supplying distinct evidences and official vouchers for what could otherwise have been, at the most, matters of doubtful suspicion and indirect presumption.

Nevertheless, in the face of all these arguments, and even allowing their weight so far as not at all to deny the injustice or the impolicy of the imperial ministers, it is contended by many persons who have reviewed the affair with a command of all the documents bearing on the case, more especially the letters or minutes of council subsequently discovered in the handwriting of Zebek-Dorchi, and the important evidence of the Russian captive Weseloff, who was carried off by the Kalmucks in their flight, that beyond all doubt Oubacha was powerless for any purpose of impeding or even of delaying the revolt. He himself, indeed, was under religious obligations of the most terrific solemnity never to flinch from the enterprise, or even to slacken in his zeal: for Zebek-Dorchi, distrusting the firmness of his resolution under any unusual pressure or alarm or difficulty, had, in the very earliest stage of the conspiracy, availed himself of the Khan's well-known superstition to engage him, by means of previous concert with the priests and their head the Lama, in some dark and mysterious rites of consecration, terminating in oaths under such terrific sanctions as no Kalmuck would have courage to violate. As far, therefore, as regarded the personal share of the Khan in what was to come, Zebek was entirely at his ease; he knew him to be so deeply pledged by religious terrors to the prosecution of the conspiracy that no honours within the Czarina's gift could have possibly shaken his adhesion: and then, as to threats from the same quarter, he knew him to be sealed against those fears by others of a gloomier character, and better adapted to his peculiar temperament. For Oubacha was a brave man as respected all bodily enemies or the dangers of human warfare, but was as sensitive and as timid as the

most superstitious of old women in facing the frowns of a priest, or under the vague anticipations of ghostly retributions. But, had it been otherwise, and had there been any reason to apprehend an unsteady demeanour on the part of this prince at the approach of the critical moment, such were the changes already effected in the state of their domestic politics amongst the Tartars, by the undermining arts of Zebek-Dorchi and his ally the Lama, that very little importance would have attached to that doubt. All power was now effectually lodged in the hands of Zebek-Dorchi. He was the true and absolute wielder of the Kalmuck sceptre; all measures of importance were submitted to his discretion; and nothing was finally resolved but under his dictation. This result he had brought about, in a year or two, by means sufficiently simple: first of all, by availing himself of the prejudice in his favour, so largely diffused amongst the lowest of the Kalmucks, that his own title to the throne, in quality of great-grandson in a direct line from Ajouka, the most illustrious of all the Kalmuck Khans, stood upon a better basis than that of Oubacha, who derived from a collateral branch; secondly, with respect to that sole advantage which Oubacha possessed above himself in the ratification of his title, by improving this difference between their situations to the disadvantage of his competitor, as one who had not scrupled to accept that triumph from an alien power at the price of his independence which he himself (as he would have it understood) disdained to court; thirdly, by his own talents and address, coupled with the ferocious energy of his moral character; fourthly—and perhaps in an equal degree—by the criminal facility and good nature of Oubacha; finally (which is remarkable enough, as

illustrating the character of the man), by that very new modelling of the Sarga or Privy Council which he had used as a principal topic of abuse and malicious insinuation against the Russian Government, whilst, in reality, he first had suggested the alteration to the Empress, and he chiefly appropriated the political advantages which it was fitted to yield. For, as he was himself appointed the chief of the Sargatchi, and as the pensions to the inferior Sargatchi passed through his hands, whilst in effect they owed their appointments to his nomination, it may be easily supposed that, whatever power existed in the state capable of controlling the Khan being held by the Sarga under its new organisation, and this body being completely under his influence, the final result was to throw all the functions of the state, whether nominally in the prince or in the council, substantially into the hands of this one man; whilst, at the same time, from the strict league which he maintained with the Lama, all the thunders of the spiritual power were always ready to come in aid of the magistrate, or to supply his incapacity in cases which he could not reach.

But the time was now rapidly approaching for the mighty experiment. The day was drawing near on which the signal was to be given for raising the standard of revolt, and by a combined movement on both sides of the Wolga for spreading the smoke of one vast conflagration, that should wrap in a common blaze their own huts and the stately cities of their enemies, over the breadth and length of those great provinces in which their flocks were dispersed. The year of the *tiger* was now within one little month of its commencement; the fifth morning of that year was fixed for the fatal day when the fortunes and happiness of a whole nation were to be put upon the

hazard of a dicer's throw; and as yet that nation was in profound ignorance of the whole plan. The Khan, such was the kindness of his nature, could not bring himself to make the revelation so urgently required. It was clear, however, that this could not be delayed; and Zebek-Dorchi took the task willingly upon himself. But where or how should this notification be made, so as to exclude Russian hearers? After some deliberation, the following plan was adopted:—Couriers, it was contrived, should arrive in furious haste, one upon the heels of another, reporting a sudden inroad of the Kirghises and Bashkirs upon the Kalmuck lands, at a point distant about one hundred and twenty miles. Thither all the Kalmuck families, according to immemorial custom, were required to send a separate representative; and there accordingly, within three days, all appeared. The distance, the solitary ground appointed for the rendezvous, the rapidity of the march, all tended to make it almost certain that no Russian could be present. Zebek-Dorchi then came forward. He did not waste many words upon rhetoric. He unfurled an immense sheet of parchment, visible from the uttermost distance at which any of this vast crowd could stand; the total number amounted to 80,000; all saw, and many heard. They were told of the oppressions of Russia; of her pride and haughty disdain evidenced towards them by a thousand acts; of her contempt for their religion; of her determination to reduce them to absolute slavery; of the preliminary measures she had already taken by erecting forts upon many of the great rivers in their neighbourhood; of the ulterior intentions she thus announced to circumscribe their pastoral lands, until they would all be obliged to renounce their flocks, and to collect in towns like

Sarepta, there to pursue mechanical and servile trades of shoemaker, tailor, and weaver, such as the freeborn Tartar had always disdained. "Then again," said the subtle prince, "she increases her military levies upon our population every year; we pour out our blood as young men in her defence, or more often in support of her insolent aggressions; and as old men we reap nothing from our sufferings, nor benefit by our survivorship where so many are sacrificed." At this point of his harangue, Zebek produced several papers (forged, as it is generally believed, by himself and the Lama), containing projects of the Russian court for a general transfer of the eldest sons taken *en masse* from the greatest Kalmuck families, to the imperial court. "Now let this be once accomplished," he argued, "and there is an end of all useful resistance from that day forwards. Petitions we might make, or even remonstrances; as men of words we might play a bold part; but for deeds, for that sort of language by which our ancestors were used to speak—holding us by such a chain, Russia would make a jest of our wishes, knowing full well that we should not dare to make any effectual movement."

Having thus sufficiently roused the angry passions of his vast audience, and having alarmed their fears by this pretended scheme against their firstborn (an artifice which was indispensable to his purpose, because it met beforehand *every* form of amendment to his proposal coming from the more moderate nobles, who would not otherwise have failed to insist upon trying the effect of bold addresses to the Empress before resorting to any desperate extremity), Zebek-Dorchi opened his scheme of revolt, and, if so, of instant revolt; since any preparations reported at St. Petersburg would be a signal for the

armies of Russia to cross into such positions from all parts of Asia as would effectually intercept their march. It is remarkable, however, that, with all his audacity and his reliance upon the momentary excitement of the Kalmucks, the subtle prince did not venture, at this stage of his seduction, to make so startling a proposal as that of a flight to China. All that he held out for the present was a rapid march to the Temba or some other great river, which they were to cross, and to take up a strong position on the farther bank, from which, as from a post of conscious security, they could hold a bolder language to the Czarina, and one which would have a better chance of winning a favourable audience.

These things, in the irritated condition of the simple Tartars, passed by acclamation; and all returned homewards to push forward with the most furious speed the preparations for their awful undertaking. Rapid and energetic these of necessity were; and in that degree they became noticeable and manifest to the Russians who happened to be intermingled with the different hordes, either on commercial errands, or as agents officially from the Russian Government, some in a financial, others in a diplomatic character.

Amongst these last (indeed at the head of them) was a Russian of some distinction, by name Kichinskoi, a man memorable for his vanity, and memorable also as one of the many victims to the Tartar revolution. This Kichinskoi had been sent by the Empress as her envoy to overlook the conduct of the Kalmucks; he was styled the Grand Pristaw, or Great Commissioner, and was universally known amongst the Tartar tribes by this title. His mixed character of ambassador and of political *surveillant*, combined with the dependent state of the

Kalmucks, gave him a real weight in the Tartar councils, and might have given him a far greater, had not his outrageous self-conceit and his arrogant confidence in his own authority, as due chiefly to his personal qualities for command, led him into such harsh displays of power, and menaces so odious to the Tartar pride, as very soon made him an object for their profoundest malice. He had publicly insulted the Khan; and, upon making a communication to him to the effect that some reports began to circulate, and even to reach the Empress, of a design in agitation to fly from the imperial dominions, he had ventured to say, "But this you dare not attempt; I laugh at such rumours; yes, Khan, I laugh at them to the Empress; for you are a chained bear, and that you know." The Khan turned away on his heel with marked disdain; and the Pristaw, foaming at the mouth, continued to utter, amongst those of the Khan's attendants who stayed behind to catch his real sentiments in a moment of unguarded passion, all that the blindest frenzy of rage could suggest to the most presumptuous of fools. It was now ascertained that suspicions *had* arisen; but at the same time it was ascertained that the Pristaw spoke no more than the truth in representing himself to have discredited these suspicions. The fact was that the mere infatuation of vanity made him believe that nothing could go on undetected by his all-piercing sagacity, and that no rebellion could prosper when rebuked by his commanding presence. The Tartars, therefore, pursued their preparations, confiding in the obstinate blindness of the Grand Pristaw as in their perfect safeguard; and such it proved—to his own ruin as well as that of myriads besides.

Christmas arrived; and a little before that time courier

upon courier came dropping in, one upon the very heels of another, to St. Petersburg, assuring the Czarina that beyond all doubt the Kalmucks were in the very crisis of departure. These despatches came from the Governor of Astrachan, and copies were instantly forwarded to Kichinskoi. Now, it happened that between this governor—a Russian named Beketoff—and the Pristaw had been an ancient feud. The very name of Beketoff inflamed his resentment; and no sooner did he see that hated name attached to the despatch than he felt himself confirmed in his former views with tenfold bigotry, and wrote instantly, in terms of the most pointed ridicule, against the new alarmist, pledging his own head upon the visionariness of his alarms. Beketoff, however, was not to be put down by a few hard words, or by ridicule: he persisted in his statements; the Russian ministry were confounded by the obstinacy of the disputants; and some were beginning even to treat the Governor of Astrachan as a bore, and as the dupe of his own nervous terrors, when the memorable day arrived, the fatal 5th of January, which forever terminated the dispute, and put a seal upon the earthly hopes and fortunes of unnumbered myriads. The Governor of Astrachan was the first to hear the news. Stung by the mixed furies of jealousy, of triumphant vengeance, and of anxious ambition, he sprang into his sledge, and, at the rate of 300 miles a day, pursued his route to St. Petersburg —rushed into the Imperial presence—announced the total realisation of his worst predictions; and, upon the confirmation of this intelligence by subsequent despatches from many different posts on the Wolga, he received an imperial commission to seize the person of his deluded enemy, and to keep him in strict captivity. These

orders were eagerly fulfilled; and the unfortunate Kichinskoi soon afterward expired of grief and mortification in the gloomy solitude of a dungeon—a victim to his own immeasurable vanity, and the blinding self-delusion of a presumption that refused all warning.

The Governor of Astrachan had been but too faithful a prophet. Perhaps even *he* was surprised at the suddenness with which the verification followed his reports. Precisely on the 5th of January, the day so solemnly appointed under religious sanctions by the Lama, the Kalmucks on the east bank of the Wolga were seen at the earliest dawn of day assembling by troops and squadrons, and in the tumultuous movement of some great morning of battle. Tens of thousands continued moving off the ground at every half-hour's interval. Women and children, to the amount of two hundred thousand and upward, were placed upon wagons, or upon camels, and drew off by masses of twenty thousand at once—placed under suitable escorts, and continually swelled in numbers by other outlying bodies of the horde, who kept falling in at various distances upon the first and second day's march. From sixty to eighty thousand of those who were the best mounted stayed behind the rest of the tribes, with purposes of devastation and plunder more violent than prudence justified, or the amiable character of the Khan could be supposed to approve. But in this, as in other instances, he was completely overruled by the malignant counsels of Zebek-Dorchi. The first tempest of the desolating fury of the Tartars discharged itself upon their own habitations. But this, as cutting off all infirm looking backward from the hardships of their march, had been thought so necessary a measure by all the chieftains that even Oubacha himself was the first to authorise the

act by his own example. He seized a torch previously prepared with materials the most durable as well as combustible, and steadily applied it to the timbers of his own palace. Nothing was saved from the general wreck except the portable part of the domestic utensils, and that part of the wood-work which could be applied to the manufacture of the long Tartar lances. This chapter in their memorable day's work being finished, and the whole of their villages throughout a district of ten thousand square miles in one simultaneous blaze, the Tartars waited for further orders.

These, it was intended, should have taken a character of valedictory vengeance, and thus have left behind to the Czarina a dreadful commentary upon the main motives of their flight. It was the purpose of Zebek-Dorchi that all the Russian towns, churches, and buildings of every description, should be given up to pillage and destruction, and such treatment applied to the defenceless inhabitants as might naturally be expected from a fierce people already infuriated by the spectacle of their own outrages, and by the bloody retaliations which they must necessarily have provoked. This part of the tragedy, however, was happily intercepted by a providential disappointment at the very crisis of departure. It has been mentioned already that the motive for selecting the depth of winter as the season of flight (which otherwise was obviously the very worst possible) had been the impossibility of effecting a junction sufficiently rapid with the tribes on the west of the Wolga, in the absence of bridges, unless by a natural bridge of ice. For this one advantage, the Kalmuck leaders had consented to aggravate by a thousandfold the calamities inevitable to a rapid flight over boundless tracts of country, with women,

children, and herds of cattle—for this one single advantage; and yet, after all, it was lost. The reason never has been explained satisfactorily, but the fact was such. Some have said that the signals were not properly concerted for marking the moment of absolute departure—that is, for signifying whether the settled intention of the Eastern Kalmucks might not have been suddenly interrupted by adverse intelligence. Others have supposed that the ice might not be equally strong on both sides of the river, and might even be generally insecure for the treading of heavy and heavily-laden animals such as camels. But the prevailing notion is that some accidental movements on the 3d and 4th of January of Russian troops in the neighbourhood of the Western Kalmucks, though really having no reference to them or their plans, had been construed into certain signs that all was discovered; and that the prudence of the Western chieftains, who, from situation, had never been exposed to those intrigues by which Zebek-Dorchi had practised upon the pride of the Eastern tribes, now stepped in to save their people from ruin. Be the cause what it might, it is certain that the Western Kalmucks were in some way prevented from forming the intended junction with their brethren of the opposite bank; and the result was that at least one hundred thousand of these Tartars were left behind in Russia. This accident it was which saved their Russian neighbours universally from the desolation which else awaited them. One general massacre and conflagration would assuredly have surprised them, to the utter extermination of their property, their houses, and themselves, had it not been for this disappointment. But the Eastern chieftains did not dare to put to hazard the safety of their brethren under the first impulse of

the Czarina's vengeance for so dreadful a tragedy; for, as they were well aware of too many circumstances by which she might discover the concurrence of the Western people in the general scheme of revolt, they justly feared that she would thence infer their concurrence also in the bloody events which marked its outset.

Little did the Western Kalmucks guess what reasons they also had for gratitude on account of an interposition so unexpected, and which at the moment they so generally deplored. Could they but have witnessed the thousandth part of the sufferings which overtook their Eastern brethren in the first month of their sad flight, they would have blessed Heaven for their own narrow escape; and yet these sufferings of the first month were but a prelude or foretaste comparatively slight of those which afterwards succeeded.

For now began to unroll the most awful series of calamities, and the most extensive, which is anywhere recorded to have visited the sons and daughters of men. It is possible that the sudden inroads of destroying nations, such as the Huns, or the Avars, or the Mongol Tartars, may have inflicted misery as extensive; but there the misery and the desolation would be sudden, like the flight of volleying lightning. Those who were spared at first would generally be spared to the end; those who perished at all would perish at once. It is possible that the French retreat from Moscow may have made some nearer approach to this calamity in duration, though still a feeble and miniature approach; for the French sufferings did not commence in good earnest until about one month from the time of leaving Moscow; and though it is true that afterwards the vials of wrath were emptied upon the devoted army for six or seven weeks in succession

yet what is that to this Kalmuck tragedy, which lasted for more than as many months? But the main feature of horror by which the Tartar march was distinguished from the French lies in the accompaniment of women and children. There were both, it is true, with the French army, but not so many as to bear any marked proportion to the total numbers concerned. The French, in short, were merely an army—a host of professional destroyers, whose regular trade was bloodshed and whose regular element was danger and suffering. But the Tartars were a nation carrying along with them more than two hundred and fifty thousand women and children, utterly unequal, for the most part, to any contest with the calamities before them. The Children of Israel were in the same circumstances as to the accompaniment of their families; but they were released from the pursuit of their enemies in a very early stage of their flight; and their subsequent residence in the Desert was not a march, but a continued halt, and under a continued interposition of Heaven for their comfortable support. Earthquakes, again, however comprehensive in their ravages, are shocks of a moment's duration. A much nearer approach made to the wide range and the long duration of the Kalmuck tragedy may have been in a pestilence such as that which visited Athens in the Peloponnesian War, or London in the reign of Charles II. There also the martyrs were counted by myriads, and the period of the desolation was counted by months. But, after all, the total amount of destruction was on a smaller scale; and there was this feature of alleviation to the *conscious* pressure of the calamity—that the misery was withdrawn from public notice into private chambers and hospitals. The siege of Jersualem by Vespasian and his son, taken

in its entire circumstances, comes nearest of all—for breadth and depth of suffering, for duration, for the exasperation of the suffering from without by internal feuds, and, finally, for that last most appalling expression of the furnace-heat of the anguish in its power to extinguish the natural affections even of maternal love. But after all, each case had circumstances of romantic misery peculiar to itself—circumstances without precedent, and (wherever human nature is ennobled by Christianity), it may be confidently hoped, never to be repeated.

The first point to be reached, before any hope of repose could be encouraged, was the river Jaik. This was not above 300 miles from the main point of departure on the Wolga; and, if the march thither was to be a forced one, and a severe one, it was alleged, on the other hand, that the suffering would be the more brief and transient; one summary exertion, not to be repeated, and all was achieved. Forced the march was, and severe beyond example: there the forewarning proved correct; but the promised rest proved a mere phantom of the wilderness—a visionary rainbow, which fled before their hope-sick eyes, across these interminable solitudes, for seven months of hardship and calamity, without a pause. These sufferings, by their very nature, and the circumstances under which they arose, were (like the scenery of the steppes) somewhat monotonous in their colouring and external features; what variety, however, there was will be most naturally exhibited by tracing historically the successive stages of the general misery, exactly as it unfolded itself under the double agency of weakness still increasing from within and hostile pressure from without. Viewed in this manner, under the real order of development, it is remarkable that these

sufferings of the Tartars, though under the moulding hands of accident, arrange themselves almost with a scenical propriety. They seem combined as with the skill of an artist; the intensity of the misery advancing regularly with the advances of the march, and the stages of the calamity corresponding to the stages of the route; so that, upon raising the curtain which veils the great catastrophe, we behold one vast climax of anguish, towering upward by regular gradations, as if constructed artificially for picturesque effect—a result which might not have been surprising had it been reasonable to anticipate the same rate of speed, and even an accelerated rate, as prevailing through the later stages of the expedition. But it seemed, on the contrary, most reasonable to calculate upon a continual decrement in the rate of motion according to the increasing distance from the headquarters of the pursuing enemy. This calculation, however, was defeated by the extraordinary circumstances that the Russian armies did not begin to close in very fiercely upon the Kalmucks until after they had accomplished a distance of full 2,000 miles: 1,000 miles farther on the assaults became even more tumultuous and murderous: and already the great shadows of the Chinese Wall were dimly described when the frenzy and *acharnement* of the pursuers, and the bloody desperation of the miserable fugitives, had reached its uttermost extremity. Let us briefly rehearse the main stages of the misery, and trace the ascending steps of the tragedy, according to the great divisions of the route marked out by the central rivers of Asia.

The first stage, we have already said, was from the Wolga to the Jaik; the distance about 300 miles; the time allowed seven days. For the first week, therefore,

the rate of marching averaged about 43 English miles a day. The weather was cold, but bracing; and, at a more moderate pace, this part of the journey might have been accomplished without much distress by a people as hardy as the Kalmucks: as it was, the cattle suffered greatly from over-driving; milk began to fail even for the children; the sheep perished by wholesale; and the children themselves were saved only by the innumerable camels.

The Cossacks who dwelt upon the banks of the Jaik were the first among the subjects of Russia to come into collision with the Kalmucks. Great was their surprise at the suddenness of the irruption, and great also their consternation; for, according to their settled custom, by far the greater part of their number was absent during the winter months at the fisheries upon the Caspian. Some who were liable to surprise at the most exposed points fled in crowds to the fortress of Koulagina, which was immediately invested and summoned by Oubacha. He had, however, in his train only a few light pieces of artillery; and the Russian commandant at Koulagina, being aware of the hurried circumstances in which the Khan was placed, and that he stood upon the very edge, as it were, of a renewed flight, felt encouraged by these considerations to a more obstinate resistance than might else have been advisable, with an enemy so little disposed to observe the usages of civilised warfare. The period of his anxiety was not long: on the fifth day of the siege he described from the walls a succession of Tartar couriers, mounted upon fleet Bactrian camels, crossing the vast plains around the fortress at furious pace, and riding into the Kalmuck encampment at various points. Great agitation appeared immediately to follow: orders

were soon after despatched in all directions; and it became speedily known that upon a distant flank of the Kalmuck movement a bloody and exterminating battle had been fought the day before, in which one entire tribe of the Khan's dependents, numbering not less than 9,000 fighting men, had perished to the last man. This was the *ouloss*, or clan, called Feka-Zechorr, between whom and the Cossacks there was a feud of ancient standing. In selecting, therefore, the points of attack, on occasion of the present hasty inroad, the Cossack chiefs were naturally eager so to direct their efforts as to combine with the service of the Empress some gratification to their own party hatreds: more especially as the present was likely to be their final opportunity for revenge, if the Kalmuck evasion should prosper. Having, therefore, concentrated as large a body of Cossack cavalry as circumstances allowed, they attacked the hostile *ouloss* with a precipitation which denied to it all means of communicating with Oubacha, for the necessity of commanding an ample range of pasturage, to meet the necessities of their vast flocks and herds, had separated this *ouloss* from the Khan's headquarters by an interval of 80 miles; and thus it was, and not from oversight, that it came to be thrown entirely upon its own resources. These had proved insufficient: retreat, from the exhausted state of their horses and camels, no less than from the prodigious encumbrances of their live stock, was absolutely out of the question: quarter was disdained on the one side, and would not have been granted on the other: and thus it had happened that the setting sun of that one day (the thirteenth from the first opening of the revolt) threw his parting rays upon the final agonies of an ancient *ouloss*, stretched upon a bloody

field, who on that day's dawning had held and styled themselves an independent nation.

Universal consternation was diffused through the wide borders of the Khan's encampments by this disastrous intelligence; not so much on account of the numbers slain, or the total extinction of a powerful ally, as because the position of the Cossack force was likely to put to hazard the future advances of the Kalmucks, or at least to retard and hold them in check until the heavier columns of the Russian army should arrive upon their flanks. The siege of Koulagina was instantly raised; and that signal, so fatal to the happiness of the women and their children, once again resounded through the tents—the signal for flight, and this time for a flight more rapid than ever. About 150 miles ahead of their present position there arose a tract of hilly country, forming a sort of margin to the vast sea-like expanse of champaign savannahs, steppes, and occasionally of sandy deserts, which stretched away on each side of this margin both eastward and westward. Pretty nearly in the centre of this hilly range lay a narrow defile, through which passed the nearest and the most practicable route to the River Torgai (the farther bank of which river offered the next great station of security for a general halt). It was the more essential to gain this pass before the Cossacks inasmuch as, not only would the delay in forcing the pass give time to the Russian pursuing columns for combining their attacks and for bringing up their artillery, but also because (even if all enemies in pursuit were thrown out of the question) it was held by those best acquainted with the difficult and obscure geography of these pathless steppes —that the loss of this one narrow strait amongst the hills

would have the effect of throwing them (as their only alternative in a case where so wide a sweep of pasturage was required) upon a circuit of at least 500 miles extra; besides that, after all, this circuitous route would carry them to the Torgai at a point ill fitted for the passage of their heavy baggage. The defile in the hills, therefore, it was resolved to gain; and yet, unless they moved upon it with the velocity of light cavalry, there was little chance but it would be found preoccupied by the Cossacks. They also, it is true, had suffered greatly in the bloody action with the defeated *ouloss;* but the excitement of victory, and the intense sympathy with their unexampled triumph, had again swelled their ranks, and would probably act with the force of a vortex to draw in their simple countrymen from the Caspian. The question, therefore, of preoccupation was reduced to a race. The Cossacks were marching upon an oblique line not above 50 miles longer than that which led to the same point from the Kalmuck headquarters before Koulagina; and therefore, without the most furious haste on the part of the Kalmucks, there was not a chance for them, burdened and "trashed" as they were, to anticipate so agile a light cavalry as the Cossacks in seizing this important pass.

Dreadful were the feelings of the poor women on hearing this exposition of the case. For they easily understood that too capital an interest (the *summa rerum*) was now at stake, to allow of any regard to minor interests, or what could be considered such in their present circumstances. The dreadful week already passed—their inauguration in misery—was yet fresh in their remembrance. The scars of suffering were impressed not only upon their memories, but upon their very persons

and the persons of their children. And they knew that, where no speed had much chance of meeting the cravings of the chieftains, no test would be accepted, short of absolute exhaustion, that as much had been accomplished as could have been accomplished. Weseloff, the Russian captive, has recorded the silent wretchedness with which the women and elder boys assisted in drawing the tent-ropes. On the 5th of January all had been animation and the joyousness of indefinite expectation; now, on the contrary, a brief but bitter experience had taught them to take an amended calculation of what it was that lay before them.

One whole day and far into the succeeding night had the renewed flight continued; the sufferings had been greater than before; for the cold had been more intense; and many perished out of the living creatures through every class, except only the camels, whose powers of endurance seemed equally adapted to cold and to heat. The second morning, however, brought an alleviation to the distress. Snow had begun to fall; and, though not deep at present, it was easily foreseen that it soon would be so; and that, as a halt would in that case become unavoidable, no plan could be better than that of staying where they were; especially as the same cause would check the advance of the Cossacks. Here then was the last interval of comfort which gleamed upon the unhappy nation during their whole migration. For ten days the snow continued to fall with little intermission. At the end of that time keen, bright, frosty weather succeeded; the drifting had ceased; in three days the smooth expanse became firm enough to support the treading of the camels; and the flight was recommenced. But during the halt much domestic comfort

had been enjoyed, and for the last time universal plenty. The cows and oxen had perished in such vast numbers on the previous marches that an order was now issued to turn what remained to account by slaughtering the whole, and salting whatever part should be found to exceed the immediate consumption. This measure led to a scene of general banqueting and even of festivity amongst all who were not incapacitated for joyous emotions by distress of mind, by grief for the unhappy experience of the few last days, and by anxiety for the too gloomy future. Seventy thousand persons of all ages had already perished, excusively of the many thousand allies who had been cut down by the Cossack sabre. And the losses in reversion were likely to be many more. For rumours began now to arrive from all quarters, by the mounted couriers whom the Khan had despatched to the rear and to each flank as well as in advance, that large masses of the imperial troops were converging from all parts of Central Asia to the fords of the River Torgai, as the most convenient point for intercepting the flying tribes; and it was by this time well known that a powerful division was close in their rear, and was retarded only by the numerous artillery which had been judged necessary to support their operations. New motives were thus daily arising for quickening the motions of the wretched Kalmucks, and for exhausting those who were already but too much exhausted.

It was not until the 2d day of February that the Khan's advanced guard came in sight of Ouchim, the defile among the hills of Mougaldchares, in which they anticipated so bloody an opposition from the Cossacks. A pretty large body of these light cavalry had, in fact, preoccupied the pass by some hours; but the Khan having

two great advantages, namely, a strong body of infantry, who had been conveyed by sections of five on about 200 camels, and some pieces of light artillery which he had not yet been forced to abandon—soon began to make a serious impression upon this unsupported detachment; and they would probably at any rate have retired; but at the very moment when they were making some dispositions in that view Zebek-Dorchi appeared upon their rear with a body of trained riflemen, who had distinguished themselves in the war with Turkey. These men had contrived to crawl unobserved over the cliffs which skirted the ravine, availing themselves of the dry beds of the summer torrents, and other inequalities of the ground, to conceal their movement. Disorder and trepidation ensued instantly in the Cossack files; the Khan, who had been waiting with the *élite* of his heavy cavalry, charged furiously upon them; total overthrow followed to the Cossacks, and a slaughter such as in some measure avenged the recent bloody extermination of their allies, the ancient *ouloss* of Feka-Zechorr. The slight horses of the Cossacks were unable to support the weight of heavy Polish dragoons and a body of trained *cameleers* (that is, cuirassiers mounted on camels); hardy they were, but not strong, nor a match for their antagonists in weight; and their extraordinary efforts through the last few days to gain their present position had greatly diminished their powers for effecting an escape. Very few, in fact, *did* escape; and the bloody day at Ouchim became as memorable amongst the Cossacks as that which, about twenty days before, had signalised the complete annihilation of the Feka-Zechorr.

The road was now open to the river Irgitch, and as yet even far beyond it to the Torgau; but how long

this state of things would continue was every day more doubtful. Certain intelligence was now received that a large Russian army, well appointed in every arm, was advancing upon the Torgau, under the command of General Traubenberg. This officer was to be joined on his route by ten thousand Bashkirs and pretty nearly the same amount of Kirghises—both hereditary enemies of the Kalmucks, both exasperated to a point of madness by the bloody trophies which Oubacha and Momotbacha had, in late years, won from such of their compatriots as served under the Sultan. The Czarina's yoke these wild nations bore with submissive patience, but not the hands by which it had been imposed; and, accordingly, catching with eagerness at the present occasion offered to their vengeance, they sent an assurance to the Czarina of their perfect obedience to her commands, and at the same time a message significantly declaring in what spirit they meant to execute them, viz., "that they would not trouble her majesty with prisoners."

Here then arose, as before with the Cossacks, a race for the Kalmucks with the regular armies of Russia, and concurrently with nations as fierce and semi-humanised as themselves, besides that they had been stung into threefold activity by the furies of mortified pride and military abasement, under the eyes of the Turkish Sultan. The forces, and more especially the artillery, of Russia were far too overwhelming to permit the thought of a regular opposition in pitched battles, even with a less dilapidated state of their resources than they could reasonably expect at the period of their arrival on the Torgau. In their speed lay their only hope—in strength of foot, as before, and not in strength of arm. Onward, therefore, the Kalmucks pressed, marking the lines of

their wide-extending march over the sad solitudes of the steppes by a never-ending chain of corpses. The old and the young, the sick man on his couch, the mother with her baby—all were dropping fast. Such sights as these, with the many rueful aggravations incident to the helpless condition of infancy—of disease and of female weakness abandoned to the wolves amidst a howling wilderness, continued to track their course through a space of full two thousand miles; for so much, at the least, it was likely to prove, including the circuits to which they often were compelled by rivers or hostile tribes, from the point of starting on the Wolga, until they could reach their destined halting ground on the east bank of the Torgau. For the first seven weeks of this march their sufferings had been embittered by the excessive severity of the cold; and every night—so long as wood was to be had for fires, either from the lading of the camels, or from the desperate sacrifice of their baggage-waggons, or (as occasionally happened) from the forests which skirted the banks of the many rivers which crossed their path—no spectacle was more frequent than that of a circle, composed of men, women, and children, gathered by hundreds round a central fire, all dead and stiff at the return of morning light. Myriads were left behind from pure exhaustion, of whom none had a chance, under the combined evils which beset them, of surviving through the next twenty-four hours. Frost, however, and snow at length ceased to persecute; the vast extent of the march at length brought them into more genial latitudes; and the unusual duration of the march was gradually bringing them into more genial seasons of the year. Two thousand miles had at last been traversed; February, March, April,

were gone; the balmy month of May had opened; vernal sights and sounds came from every side to comfort the heart-weary travellers; and at last, in the latter end of May, crossing the Torgau, they took up a position where they hoped to find liberty to repose themselves for many weeks in comfort as well as in security, and to draw such supplies from the fertile neighbourhood as might restore their shattered forces to a condition for executing, with less of wreck and ruin, the large remainder of the journey.

Yes; it was true that two thousand miles of wandering had been completed, but in a period of nearly five months, and with the terrific sacrifice of at least two hundred and fifty thousand souls, to say nothing of herds and flocks past all reckoning. These had all perished: ox, cow, horse, mule, ass, sheep, or goat, not one survived—only the camels. These arid and adust creatures, looking like the mummies of some antediluvian animals, without the affections or sensibilities of flesh and blood—these only still erected their speaking eyes to the eastern heavens, and had to all appearance come out from this long tempest of trial unscathed and hardly diminished. The Khan, knowing how much he was individually answerable for the misery which had been sustained, must have wept tears even more bitter than those of Xerxes, when he threw his eyes over the myriads whom he had assembled: for the tears of Xerxes were unmingled with compunction. Whatever amends were in his power the Khan resolved to make, by sacrifices to the general good of all personal regards; and, accordingly, even at this point of their advance, he once more deliberately brought under review the whole question of the revolt. The question was

formally debated before the Council, whether, even at this point, they should untread their steps, and, throwing themselves upon the Czarina's mercy, return to their old allegiance. In that case, Oubacha professed himself willing to become the scapegoat for the general transgression. This, he argued, was no fantastic scheme, but even easy of accomplishment; for the unlimited and sacred power of the Khan, so well known to the Empress, made it absolutely iniquitous to attribute any separate responsibility to the people—upon the Khan rested the guilt, upon the Khan would descend the imperial vengeance. This proposal was applauded for its generosity, but was energetically opposed by Zebek-Dorchi. Were they to lose the whole journey of two thousand miles? Was their misery to perish without fruit? True it was that they had yet reached only the half-way house; but, in that respect, the motives were evenly balanced for retreat or for advance. Either way they would have pretty nearly the same distance to traverse, but with this difference—that, forward, their route lay through lands comparatively fertile; backward, through a blasted wilderness, rich only in memorials of their sorrow, and hideous to Kalmuck eyes by the trophies of their calamity. Besides, though the Empress might accept an excuse for the past, would she the less forbear to suspect for the future? The Czarina's *pardon* they might obtain, but could they ever hope to recover her *confidence?* Doubtless there would now be a standing presumption against them, an immortal ground of jealousy; and a jealous government would be but another name for a harsh one. Finally, whatever motives there ever had been for the revolt surely remained unimpaired by anything that had

occurred. In reality, the revolt was, after all, no revolt, but (strictly speaking) a return to their old allegiance; since, not above one hundred and fifty years ago (viz., in the year 1616), their ancestors had revolted from the Emperor of China. They had now tried both governments; and for them China was the land of promise, and Russia the house of bondage.

Spite, however, of all that Zebek could say or do, the yearning of the people was strongly in behalf of the Khan's proposal; the pardon of their prince, they persuaded themselves, would be readily conceded by the Empress; and there is little doubt that they would at this time have thrown themselves gladly upon the imperial mercy; when suddenly all was defeated by the arrival of two envoys from Traubenberg. This general had reached the fortress of Orsk, after a very painful march, on the 12th of April; thence he set forwards toward Oriembourg; which he reached upon the 1st of June, having been joined on his route at various times during the month of May by the Kirghises and a corps of ten thousand Bashkirs. From Oriembourg he sent forward his official offers to the Khan, which were harsh and peremptory, holding out no specific stipulations as to pardon or impunity, and exacting unconditional submission as the preliminary price of any cessation from military operations. The personal character of Traubenberg, which was anything but energetic, and the condition of his army, disorganised in a great measure by the length and severity of the march, made it probable that, with a little time for negotiation, a more conciliatory tone would have been assumed. But, unhappily for all parties, sinister events occurred in the meantime, such as effectually put an end to every hope of the kind.

The two envoys sent forward by Traubenberg had reported to this officer that a distance of only ten days' march lay between his own headquarters and those of the Khan. Upon this fact transpiring, the Kirghises, by their prince Nourali, and the Bashkirs, entreated the Russian general to advance without delay. Once having placed his cannon in position, so as to command the Kalmuck camp, the fate of the rebel Khan and his people would be in his own hands; and they would themselves form his advanced guard. Traubenberg, however (*why* has not been certainly explained), refused to march, grounding his refusal upon the condition of his army, and their absolute need of refreshment. Long and fierce was the altercation; but at length, seeing no chance of prevailing, and dreading above all other events the escape of their detested enemy, the ferocious Bashkirs went off in a body by forced marches. In six days they reached the Torgau, crossed by swimming their horses, and fell upon the Kalmucks, who were dispersed for many a league in search of food or provender for their camels. The first day's action was one vast succession of independent skirmishes, diffused over a field of thirty to forty miles in extent; one party often breaking up into three or four, and again (according to the accidents of ground three or four blending into one; flight and pursuit, rescue and total overthrow, going on simultaneously, under all varieties of form, in all quarters of the plain. The Bashkirs had found themselves obliged, by the scattered state of the Kalmucks, to split up into innumerable sections; and thus, for some hours, it had been impossible for the most practised eye to collect the general tendency of the day's fortune. Both the Khan and Zebek-Dorchi were at one moment made prisoners, and

more than once in imminent danger of being cut down; but at length Zebek succeeded in rallying a strong column of infantry, which, with the support of the camel corps on each flank, compelled the Bashkirs to retreat. Clouds, however, of these wild cavalry continued to arrive through the next two days and nights, followed or accompanied by the Kirghises. These being viewed as the advanced parties of Traubenberg's army, the Kalmuck chieftains saw no hope of safety but in flight; and in this way it happened that a retreat, which had so recently been brought to a pause, was resumed at the very moment when the unhappy fugitives were anticipating a deep repose without further molestation the whole summer through.

It seemed as though every variety of wretchedness were predestined to the Kalmucks, and as if their sufferings were incomplete unless they were rounded and matured by all that the most dreadful agencies of summer's heat could superadd to those of frost and winter. To this sequel of their story I shall immediately revert, after first noticing a little romantic episode which occurred at this point between Oubacha and his unprincipled cousin Zebek-Dorchi.

There was at the time of the Kalmuck flight from the Wolga a Russian gentleman of some rank at the court of the Khan, whom, for political reasons, it was thought necessary to carry along with them as a captive. For some weeks his confinement had been very strict, and in one or two instances cruel. But, as the increasing distance was continually diminishing the chances of escape, and perhaps, also, as the misery of the guards gradually withdrew their attention from all minor interests to their own personal sufferings, the vigilance of the custody grew more and more relaxed; until at length, upon a petition

to the Khan, Mr. Weseloff was formally restored to liberty; and it was understood that he might use his liberty in whatever way he chose, even for returning to Russia, if that should be his wish. Accordingly, he was making active preparations for his journey to St. Petersburg, when it occurred to Zebek-Dorchi that, not improbably, in some of the battles which were then anticipated with Traubenberg, it might happen to them to lose some prisoner of rank, in which case the Russian Weseloff would be a pledge in their hands for negotiating an exchange. Upon this plea, to his own severe affliction, the Russian was detained until the further pleasure of the Khan. The Khan's name, indeed, was used through the whole affair; but, as it seemed, with so little concurrence on his part, that, when Weseloff in a private audience humbly remonstrated upon the injustice done him, and the cruelty of thus sporting with his feelings by setting him at liberty, and, as it were, tempting him into dreams of home and restored happiness only for the purpose of blighting them, the good-natured prince disclaimed all participation in the affair, and went so far in proving his sincerity as even to give him permission to effect his escape; and, as a ready means of commencing it without raising suspicion, the Khan mentioned to Mr. Weseloff that he had just then received a message from the Hetman of the Bashkirs, soliciting a private interview on the banks of the Torgau at a spot pointed out: that interview was arranged for the coming night; and Mr. Weseloff might go in the Khan's *suite*, which on either side was not to exceed three persons. Weseloff was a prudent man, acquainted with the world, and he read treachery in the very outline of this scheme, as stated by the Khan—treachery against the Khan's

person. He mused a little, and then communicated so much of his suspicions to the Khan as might put him on his guard; but, upon further consideration, he begged leave to decline the honour of accompanying the Khan. The fact was that three Kalmucks, who had strong motives for returning to their countrymen on the west bank of the Wolga, guessing the intentions of Weseloff, had offered to join him in his escape. These men the Khan would probably find himself obliged to countenance in their project; so that it became a point of honour with Weseloff to conceal their intentions, and therefore to accomplish the evasion from the camp (of which the first steps only would be hazardous) without risking the notice of the Khan.

The district in which they were now encamped abounded through many hundred miles with wild horses of a docile and beautiful breed. Each of the four fugitives had caught from seven to ten of these spirited creatures in the course of the last few days: this raised no suspicion, for the rest of the Kalmucks had been making the same sort of provision against the coming toils of their remaining route to China. These horses were secured by halters, and hidden about dusk in the thickets which lined the margin of the river. To these thickets, about ten at night, the four fugitives repaired; they took a circuitous path, which drew them as little as possible within danger of challenge from any of the outposts or of the patrols which had been established on the quarters where the Bashkirs lay; and in three-quarters of an hour they reached the rendezvous. The moon had now risen, the horses were unfastened, and they were in the act of mounting, when suddenly the deep silence of the woods was disturbed by a violent uproar and the clashing of

arms. Weseloff fancied that he heard the voice of the Khan shouting for assistance. He remembered the communication made by that prince in the morning; and, requesting his compansion to support him, he rode off in the direction of the sound. A very short distance brought him to an open glade within the wood, where he beheld four men contending with a party of at least nine or ten. Two of the four were dismounted at the very instant of Weseloff's arrival; one of these he recognised almost certainly as the Khan, who was fighting hand to hand, but at great disadvantage, with two of the adverse horsemen. Seeing that no time was to be lost, Weseloff fired and brought down one of the two. His companions discharged their carbines at the same moment, and then all rushed simultaneously into the little open area. The thundering sound of about thirty horses all rushing at once into narrow space gave the impression that a whole troop of cavalry was coming down upon the assailants, who accordingly wheeled about and fled with one impulse. Weseloff advanced to the dismounted cavalier, who, as he expected, proved to be the Khan. The man whom Weseloff had shot was lying dead; and both were shocked, though Weseloff at least was not surprised, on stooping down and scrutinising his features, to recognise a well-known confidential servant of Zebek-Dorchi. Nothing was said by either party; the Khan rode off escorted by Weseloff and his companions, and for some time a dead silence prevailed. The situation of Weseloff was delicate and critical; to leave the Khan at this point was probably to cancel their recent services; for he might be again crossed on his path, and again attacked by the very party from whom he had just been delivered. Yet, on the other hand, to return to the camp was to endanger

the chances of accomplishing the escape. The Khan, also, was apparently revolving all this in his mind, for at length he broke silence, and said, "I comprehend your situation; and under other circumstances I might feel it my duty to detain your companions. But it would ill become me to do so after the important service you have just rendered me. Let us turn a little to the left. There, where you see the watch-fire, is an outpost. Attend me so far. I am then safe. You may turn and pursue your enterprise; for the circumstances under which you will appear, as my escort, are sufficient to shield you from all suspicion for the present. I regret having no better means at my disposal for testifying my gratitude. But tell me before we part—Was it accident only which led you to my rescue? Or had you acquired any knowledge of the plot by which I was decoyed into this snare?" Weseloff answered very candidly that mere accident had brought him to the spot at which he heard the uproar, but that, *having* heard it, and connecting it with the Khan's communication of the morning, he had then designedly gone after the sound in a way which he certainly should not have done at so critical a moment, unless in the expectation of finding the Khan assaulted by assassins. A few minutes after they reached the outpost at which it became safe to leave the Tartar chieftain; and immediately the four fugitives commenced a flight which is perhaps without a parallel in the annals of travelling. Each of them led six or seven horses besides the one he rode; and, by shifting from one to the other (like the ancient Desultors of the Roman circus), so as never to burden the same horse for more than half an hour at a time, they continued to advance at the rate of 200 miles in the 24 hours for three days

consecutively. After that time, conceiving themselves beyond pursuit, they proceeded less rapidly; though still with a velocity which staggered the belief of Weseloff's friends in after years. He was, however, a man of high principle, and always adhered firmly to the details of his printed report. One of the circumstances there stated is that they continued to pursue the route by which the Kalmucks had fled, never for an instant finding any difficulty in tracing it by the skeletons and other memorials of their calamities. In particular, he mentions vast heaps of money as part of the valuable property which it had been found necessary to sacrifice. These heaps were found lying still untouched in the deserts. From these Weseloff and his companions took as much as they could conveniently carry; and this it was, with the price of their beautiful horses, which they afterwards sold at one of the Russian military settlements for about £15 apiece, which eventually enabled them to pursue their journey in Russia. This journey, as regarded Weseloff in particular, was closed by a tragical catastrophe. He was at that time young, and the only child of a doating mother. Her affliction under the violent abduction of her son had been excessive, and probably had undermined her constitution. Still she had supported it. Weseloff, giving way to the natural impulses of his filial affection, had imprudently posted through Russia to his mother's house without warning of his approach. He rushed precipitately into her presence; and she, who had stood the shocks of sorrow, was found unequal to the shock of joy too sudden and too acute. She died upon the spot.

I now revert to the final scenes of the Kalmuck flight. These it would be useless to pursue circumstantially

through the whole two thousand miles of suffering which remained; for the character of that suffering was even more monotonous than on the former half of the flight, and also more severe. Its main elements were excessive heat, with the accompaniments of famine and thirst, but aggravated at every step by the murderous attacks of their cruel enemies, the Bashkirs and the Kirghises.

These people, "more fell than anguish, hunger, or the sea," stuck to the unhappy Kalmucks like a swarm of enraged hornets. And very often, whilst *they* were attacking them in the rear, their advanced parties and flanks were attacked with almost equal fury by the people of the country which they were traversing; and with good reason, since the law of self-preservation had now obliged the fugitive Tartars to plunder provisions, and to forage wherever they passed. In this respect their condition was a constant oscillation of wretchedness; for sometimes, pressed by grinding famine, they took a circuit of perhaps a hundred miles, in order to strike into a land rich in the comforts of life; but in such a land they were sure to find a crowded population, of which every arm was raised in unrelenting hostility, with all the advantages of local knowledge, and with constant preoccupation of all the defensible positions, mountain passes, or bridges. Sometimes, again, wearied out with this mode of suffering, they took a circuit of perhaps a hundred miles, in order to strike into a land with few or no inhabitants. But in such a land they were sure to meet absolute starvation. Then, again, whether with or without this plague of starvation, whether with or without this plague of hostility in front, whatever might be the "fierce varieties" of their misery in this respect, no rest ever came to their unhappy rear; *post equitem sedet*

atra cura; it was a torment like the undying worm of conscience. And, upon the whole, it presented a spectacle altogether unprecedented in the history of mankind. Private and personal malignity is not unfrequently immortal; but rare indeed is it to find the same pertinacity of malice in a nation. And what embittered the interest was that the malice was reciprocal. Thus far the parties met upon equal terms; but that equality only sharpened the sense of their dire inequality as to other circumstances. The Bashkirs were ready to fight "from morn to dewy eve." The Kalmucks, on the contrary, were always obliged to run. Was it *from* their enemies as creatures whom they feared? No; but *toward* their friends—toward that final haven of China—as what was hourly implored by the prayers of their wives, and the tears of their children. But, though they fled unwillingly, too often they fled in vain—being unwillingly recalled. There lay the torment. Every day the Bashkirs fell upon them; every day the same unprofitable battle was renewed; as a matter of course, the Kalmucks recalled part of their advanced guard to fight them; every day the battle raged for hours, and uniformly with the same result. For no sooner did the Bashkirs find themselves too heavily pressed, and that the Kalmuck march had been retarded by some hours, than they retired into the boundless deserts, where all pursuit was hopeless. But, if the Kalmucks resolved to press forward, regardless of their enemies, in that case their attacks became so fierce and overwhelming that the general safety seemed likely to be brought into question; nor could any effectual remedy be applied to the case, even for each separate day, except by a most embarrassing halt, and by countermarches that, to men in their circumstances, were almost

worse than death. It will not be surprising that the irritation of such a systematic persecution, superadded to a previous and hereditary hatred, and accompanied by the stinging consciousness of utter impotence as regarded all effectual vengeance, should gradually have inflamed the Kalmuck animosity into the wildest expression of downright madness and frenzy. Indeed, long before the frontiers of China were approached, the hostility of both sides had assumed the appearance much more of a warfare amongst wild beasts than amongst creatures acknowledging the restraints of reason or the claims of a common nature. The spectacle became too atrocious; it was that of a host of lunatics pursued by a host of fiends.

On a fine morning in early autumn of the year 1771, Kien Long, the Emperor of China, was pursuing his amusements in a wild frontier district lying on the outside of the Great Wall. For many hundred square leagues the country was desolate of inhabitants, but rich in woods of ancient growth, and overrun with game of every description. In a central spot of this solitary region the Emperor had built a gorgeous hunting lodge, to which he resorted annually for recreation and relief from the cares of government. Led onward in pursuit of game, he had rambled to a distance of 200 miles or more from this lodge, followed at a little distance by a sufficient military escort, and every night pitching his tent in a different situation, until at length he had arrived on the very margin of the vast central deserts of Asia. Here he was standing by accident at an opening of his pavilion, enjoying the morning sunshine, when suddenly to the westward there arose a vast, cloudy vapour, which by degrees expanded, mounted, and seemed to be slowly diffusing

itself over the whole face of the heavens. By and by this vast sheet of mist began to thicken toward the horizon, and to roll forward in billowy volumes. The Emperor's suit assembled from all quarters. The silver trumpets were sounded in the rear, and from all the glades and forest avenues began to trot forward toward the pavilion the yagers—half cavalry, half huntsmen—who composed the imperial escort. Conjecture was on the stretch to divine the cause of this phenomenon, and the interest continually increased, in proportion as simple curiosity gradually deepened into the anxiety of uncertain danger. At first it had been imagined that some vast troops of deer, or other wild animals of the chase, had been disturbed in their forest haunts by the Emperor's movements, or possibly by wild beasts prowling for prey, and might be fetching a compass by way of re-entering the forest grounds at some remoter points secure from molestation. But this conjecture was dissipated by the slow increase of the cloud, and the steadiness of its motion. In the course of two hours the vast phenomenon had advanced to a point which was judged to be within five miles of the spectators, though all calculations of distance were difficult, and often fallacious, when applied to the endless expanses of the Tartar deserts. Through the next hour, during which the gentle morning breeze had a little freshened, the dusty vapour had developed itself far and wide into the appearance of huge aërial draperies, hanging in mighty volumes from the sky to the earth; and at particular points, where the eddies of the breeze acted upon the pendulous skirts of these aerial curtains, rents were perceived, sometimes taking the form of regular arches, portals and windows, through which began dimly to

gleam the heads of camels "indorsed" with human beings —and at intervals the moving of men and horses in tumultuous array—and then through other openings or vistas at far distant points the flashing of polished arms. But sometimes, as the wind slackened or died away, all those openings, of whatever form, in the cloudy pall would slowly close, and for a time the whole pageant was shut up from view; although the growing din, the clamours, shrieks and groans, ascending from infuriated myriads reported, in a language not to be misunderstood, what was going on behind the cloudy screen.

It was in fact the Kalmuck host, now in the last extremities of their exhaustion, and very fast approaching to that final stage of privation and killing misery beyond which few or none could have lived, but also, happily for themselves, fast approaching (in a literal sense) that final stage of their long pilgrimage at which they would meet hospitality on a scale of royal magnificence, and full protection from their enemies. These enemies, however, as yet were still hanging on their rear as fiercely as ever, though this day was destined to be the last of their hideous persecution. The Khan had, in fact, sent forward couriers with all the requisite statements and petitions addressed to the Emperor of China. These had been duly received, and preparations made in consequence to welcome the Kalmucks with the most paternal benevolence. But, as these couriers had been despatched from the Torgau at the moment of arrival thither, and before the advance of Traubenberg had made it necessary for the Khan to order a hasty renewal of the flight, the Emperor had not looked for their arrival on his frontiers until full three months after the present time. The Khan had indeed expressly notified his intention to pass

the summer heats on the banks of the Torgau, and to recommence his retreat about the beginning of September. The subsequent change of plan, being unknown to Kien Long, left him for some time in doubt as to the true interpretation to be put upon this mighty apparition in the desert, but at length the savage clamours of hostile fury, and the clangour of weapons, unveiled to the Emperor the true nature of those unexpected calamities which had so prematurely precipitated the Kalmuck measures.

Apprehending the real state of affairs, the Emperor instantly perceived that the first act of his fatherly care for these erring children (as he esteemed them), now returning to their ancient obedience, must be—to deliver them from their pursuers. And this was less difficult than might have been supposed. Not many miles in the rear was a body of well-appointed cavalry, with a strong detachment of artillery, who always attended the Emperor's motions. These were hastily summoned. Meantime it occurred to the train of courtiers that some danger might arise to the Emperor's person from the proximity of a lawless enemy; and accordingly he was induced to retire a little to the rear. It soon appeared, however, to those who watched the vapoury shroud in the desert, that its motion was not such as would argue the direction of the march to be exactly upon the pavilion but rather in a diagonal line, making an angle of full 45 degrees with that line in which the imperial *cortège* had been standing, and therefore with a distance continually increasing. Those who knew the country judged that the Kalmucks were making for a large fresh-water lake about seven or eight miles distant. They were right: and to that point the imperial cavalry

was ordered up; and it was precisely in that spot, and about three hours after, and at noonday on the 8th of September, that the great Exodus of the Kalmuck Tartars was brought to a final close, and with a scene of such memorable and hellish fury as formed an appropriate winding up to an expedition in all its parts and details so awfully disastrous. The Emperor was not personally present, or at least he saw whatever he *did* see from too great a distance to discriminate its individual features; but he records in his written memorial the report made to him of this scene by some of his own officers.

The Lake of Tengis, near the dreadful desert of Kobi, lay in a hollow amongst hills of a moderate height, ranging generally from two to three thousand feet high. About eleven o'clock in the forenoon, the Chinese cavalry reached the summit of a road which led through a cradle-like dip in the mountains right down upon the margin of the lake. From this pass, elevated about two thousand feet above the level of the water, they continued to descend, by a very winding and difficult road, for an hour and a half; and during the whole of this descent they were compelled to be inactive spectators of the fiendish spectacle below. The Kalmucks, reduced by this time from about six hundred thousand souls to two hundred and sixty thousand, and after enduring for so long a time the miseries I have previously described —outrageous heat, famine, and the destroying scimitar of the Kirghises and the Bashkirs—had for the last ten days been traversing a hideous desert, where no vestiges were seen of vegetation, and no drop of water could be found. Camels and men were already so overladen that it was a mere impossibility that they should carry a

tolerable sufficiency for the passage of this frightful wilderness. On the eighth day, the wretched daily allowance, which had been continually diminishing, failed entirely; and thus, for two days of insupportable fatigue, the horrors of thirst had been carried to the fiercest extremity. Upon this last morning, at the sight of the hills and the forest scenery, which announced to those who acted as guides the neighbourhood of the Lake of Tengis, all the people rushed along with maddening eagerness to the anticipated solace. The day grew hotter and hotter, the people more and more exhausted, and gradually, in the general rush forward to the lake, all discipline and command were lost—all attempts to preserve a rearguard were neglected—the wild Bashkirs rode in amongst the encumbered people, and slaughtered them by wholesale, and almost without resistance. Screams and tumultuous shouts proclaimed the progress of the massacre; but none heeded—none halted; all alike, pauper or noble, continued to rush on with maniacal haste to the waters—all with faces blackened by the heat preying upon the liver, and with tongue drooping from the mouth. The cruel Bashkir was affected by the same misery, and manifested the same symptoms of his misery, as the wretched Kalmuck; the murderer was oftentimes in the same frantic misery as his murdered victim—many indeed (an ordinary effect of thirst) in both nations had become lunatic, and in this state, whilst mere multitude and condensation of bodies alone opposed any check to the destroying scimitar and the trampling hoof, the lake was reached; and into that the whole vast body of enemies rushed, and together continued to rush, forgetful of all things at that moment but of one almighty instinct. This absorption of the thoughts

in one maddening appetite lasted for a single half-hour; but in the next arose the final scene of parting vengeance. Far and wide the waters of the solitary lake were instantly dyed red with blood and gore: here rode a party of savage Bashkirs, hewing off heads as fast as the swaths fall before the mower's scythe; there stood unarmed Kalmucks in a death-grapple with their detested foes, both up to the middle in water, and oftentimes both sinking together below the surface, from weakness or from struggles, and perishing in each other's arms. Did the Bashkirs at any point collect into a cluster for the sake of giving impetus to the assault? Thither were the camels driven in fiercely by those who rode them, generally women or boys; and even these quiet creatures were forced into a share in this carnival of murder, by trampling down as many as they could strike prostrate with the lash of their fore-legs. Every moment the water grew more polluted; and yet every moment fresh myriads came up to the lake and rushed in, not able to resist their frantic thirst, and swallowing large draughts of water visibly contaminated with the blood of their slaughtered compatriots. Wheresoever the lake was shallow enough to allow of men raising their heads above the water, there, for scores of acres, were to be seen all forms of ghastly fear, of agonising struggle, of spasm, of death, and the fear of death—revenge, and the lunacy of revenge —until the neutral spectators, of whom there were not a few, now descending the eastern side of the lake, at length averted their eyes in horror. This horror, which seemed incapable of further addition, was, however, increased by an unexpected incident. The Bashkirs, beginning to perceive here and there the approach of the Chinese cavalry, felt it prudent—wheresoever they

were sufficiently at leisure from the passions of the murderous scene—to gather into bodies. This was noticed by the governor of a small Chinese fort, built upon an eminence above the lake; and immediately he threw in a broadside, which spread havoc amongst the Bashkir tribe. As often as the Bashkirs collected into "*globes*" and "*turms*," as their only means of meeting the long line of descending Chinese cavalry—so often did the Chinese governor of the fort pour in his exterminating broadside; until at length the lake, at its lower end, became one vast seething caldron of human bloodshed and carnage. The Chinese cavalry had reached the foot of the hills; the Bashkirs, attentive to *their* movements, had formed; skirmishes had been fought: and, with a quick sense that the contest was henceforward rapidly becoming hopeless, the Bashkirs and Kirghises began to retire. The pursuit was not as vigorous as the Kalmuck hatred would have desired. But, at the same time, the very gloomiest hatred could not but find, in their own dreadful experience of the Asiatic deserts, and in the certainty that these wretched Bashkirs had to repeat that same experience a second time, for thousands of miles, as the price exacted by a retributory Providence for their vindictive cruelty—not the very gloomiest of the Kalmucks, or the least reflecting, but found in all this retaliatory chastisement more complete and absolute than any which their swords and lances could have obtained, or human vengeance could have devised.

Here ends the tale of the Kalmuck wanderings in the Desert; for any subsequent marches which awaited them were neither long nor painful. Every possible alleviation and refreshment for their exhausted bodies

had been already provided by Kien Long with the most princely munificence; and lands of great fertility were immediately assigned to them in ample extent along the river Ily, not very far from the point at which they had first emerged from the wilderness of Kobi. But the beneficent attention of the Chinese Emperor may be best stated in his own words, as translated into French by one of the Jesuit missionaries:—"La nation des Torgotes (*savoir les Kalmuques*) arriva à Ily, toute delabrée, n'ayant ni de quoi vivre, ni de quoi se vêtir. Je l'avais prévu; et j'avais ordonné de faire en tout genre les provisions nécessaires pour pouvoir les secourir promptement: c'est ce qui a été exécuté. On a fait la division des terres, et on a assigné à chaque famille une portion suffisante pour pouvoir servir à son entretien, soit en la cultivant, soit en y nourissant des bestiaux. On a donné à chaque particulier des étoffes pour l'habiller, des grains pour se nourrir pendant l'espace d'une année, des ustensiles pour le ménage, et d'autres choses nécessaires: et outre cela plusieurs onces d'argent, pour se pourvoir de ce qu'on aurait pu oublier. On a designé des lieux particuliers, fertiles en pâturages; et on leur a donné des bœufs, moutons, etc., pour qu'ils pussent dans la suite travailler par eux-mêmes à leur entretien et à leur bien-être."

These are the words of the Emperor himself, speaking in his own person of his own paternal cares; but another Chinese, treating the same subject, records the munificence of this prince in terms which proclaim still more forcibly the disinterested generosity which prompted, and the delicate considerateness which conducted, this extensive bounty. He has been speaking of the Kalmucks, and he goes on thus:—"Lorsqu'ils arrivèrent

sur nos frontiéres (au nombre de plusieurs centaines de mille, quoique la fatigue extrême, la faim, la soif, et toutes les autres incommodités inséparables d'une trés-longue et trés pénilbe route en eussent fait périr presque autant), ils étaient réduits à la dernière misère; ils manquaient de tout. Il" [viz., l'Empereur, Kien Long] "leur fit préparer des logemens conformes à leur manière de vivre: il leur fit distribuer des alimens et des habits; il leur fit donner des bœufs, des moutons, et des ustensiles, pour les mettre en état de former des troupeaux et de cultiver la terre, et tout cela à ses propres frais, qui se sont montés à des sommes immenses, sans compter l'argent qu'il a donné à chaque chef-de-famille, pour pourvoir à la subsistance de sa femme et de ses enfans."

Thus, after their memorable year of misery, the Kalmucks were replaced in territorial possessions, and in comfort equal perhaps, or even superior, to that which they had enjoyed in Russia, and with superior political advantages. But, if equal or superior, their condition was no longer the same; if not in degree, their social prosperity had altered in quality; for, instead of being a purely pastoral and vagrant people, they were now in circumstances which obliged them to become essentially dependent upon agriculture; and thus far raised in social rank, that, by the natural course of their habits and the necessities of life, they were effectually reclaimed from roving and from the savage customs connected with a half nomadic life. They gained also in political privileges, chiefly through the immunity from military service which their new relations enabled them to obtain. These were circumstances of advantage and gain. But one great disadvantage there was, amply to overbalance all other possible gain: the chances were lost or were

removed to an incalculable distance for their conversion to Christianity, without which, in these times, there is no absolute advance possible on the path of true civilisation.

One word remains to be said upon the *personal* interests concerned in this great drama. The catastrophe in this respect was remarkable and complete. Oubacha, with all his goodness and incapacity of suspecting, had, since the mysterious affair on the banks of the Torgau, felt his mind alienated from his cousin: he revolted from the man that would have murdered him; and he had displayed his caution so visibly as to provoke a reaction in the bearing of Zebek-Dorchi, and a displeasure which all his dissimulation could not hide. This had produced a feud, which, by keeping them aloof, had probably saved the life of Oubacha; for the friendship of Zebek-Dorchi was more fatal than his open enmity. After the settlement on the Ily this feud continued to advance, until it came under the notice of the Emperor, on occasion of a visit which all the Tartar chieftains made to his Majesty at his hunting lodge in 1772. The Emperor informed himself accurately of all the particulars connected with the transaction—of all the rights and claims put forward—and of the way in which they would severally affect the interests of the Kalmuck people. The consequence was that he adopted the cause of Oubacha, and repressed the pretensions of Zebek-Dorchi, who, on his part, so deeply resented this discountenance to his ambitious projects, that, in conjunction with other chiefs, he had the presumption even to weave nets of treason against the Emperor himself. Plots were laid, were detected, were baffled; counterplots were constructed upon the same basis, and with the benefits of the opportunities thus offered.

Finally, Zebek-Dorchi was invited to the imperial lodge, together with all his accomplices; and, under the skilful management of the Chinese nobles in the Emperor's establishment, the murderous artifices of these Tartar chieftains were made to recoil upon themselves; and the whole of them perished by assassination at a great imperial banquet. For the Chinese morality is exactly of that kind which approves in every thing the *lex talionis:*

> "———Lex nec justior ulla est (as *they* think)
> Quam necis artifices arte perire sua."

So perished Zebek-Dorchi, the author and originator of the great Tartar Exodus. Oubacha, meantime, and his people, were gradually recovering from the effects of their misery, and repairing their losses. Peace and prosperity, under the gentle rule of a fatherly lord paramount, redawned upon the tribes: their household *lares*, after so harsh a translation to distant climes, found again a happy reinstatement in what had, in fact, been their primitive abodes: they found themselves settled in quiet sylvan scenes, rich in all the luxuries of life, and endowed with the perfect loveliness of Arcadian beauty. But from the hills of this favoured land, and even from the level grounds as they approached its western border, they still look out upon that fearful wilderness which once beheld a nation in agony—the utter extirpation of nearly half a million from amongst its numbers, and, for the remainder, a storm of misery so fierce that in the end (as happened also at Athens during the Peloponnesian War from a different form of misery) very many lost their memory: all records of their past life were wiped out as with a sponge—utterly erased and

cancelled: and many others lost their reason; some in a gentle form of pensive melancholy, some in a more restless form of feverish delirium and nervous agitation, and others in the fixed forms of tempestuous mania, raving frenzy, or moping idiocy. Two great commemorative monuments arose in after years to mark the depth and permanence of the awe—the sacred and reverential grief, with which all persons looked back upon the dread calamities attached to the year of the tiger—all who had either personally shared in those calamities and had themselves drunk from that cup of sorrow, or who had effectually been made witnesses to their results and associated with their relief: two great monuments; one embodied in the religious solemnity, enjoined by the Dalai Lama, called in the Tartar language a *Romanang* —that is, a national commemoration, with music the most rich and solemn, of all the souls who departed to the rest of Paradise from the afflictions of the Desert (this took place about six years after the arrival in China); secondly, another, more durable and more commensurate to the scale of the calamity and to the grandeur of this national Exodus, in the mighty columns of granite and brass erected by the Emperor Kien Long near the banks of the Ily. These columns stand upon the very margin of the *steppes;* and they bear a short but emphatic inscription to the following effect:—

By the Will of God.
Here, upon the Brink of these Deserts,
Which from this Point begin and stretch away
Pathless, treeless, waterless,
For thousands of miles—and along the margins of many mighty Nations,
Rested from their labours and from great afflictions,
Under the shadow of the Chinese Wall,

And by the favour of KIEN LONG, God's Lieutenant upon Earth,
The ancient Children of the Wilderness—the Torgote Tartars—
Flying before the wrath of the Grecian Czar,
Wandering Sheep who had strayed away from the Celestial
Empire in the year 1616
But are now mercifully gathered again, after infinite sorrow,
Into the fold of their forgiving Shepherd.
Hallowed be the spot forever,
and
Hallowed be the day —September 8, 1771 !
Amen.

—THOMAS DE QUINCEY.

X

CINDERS FROM THE ASHES

THE personal revelations contained in my report of certain breakfast-table conversations were so charitably listened to and so good-naturedly interpreted, that I may be in danger of becoming over-communicative. Still, I should never have ventured to tell the trivial experiences here thrown together, were it not that my brief story is illuminated here and there by a glimpse of some shining figure that trod the same path with me for a time, or crossed it, leaving a momentary or lasting brightness in its track. I remember that, in furnishing a chamber some years ago, I was struck with its dull aspect as I looked round on the black-walnut chairs and bedstead and bureau. "Make me a large and handsomely wrought gilded handle to the key of that dark chest of drawers," I said to the furnisher. It was done, and that one luminous point redeemed the sombre apartment as the evening star glorifies the dusky firmament. So, my loving reader—and to none other can such table-talk as this be addressed—I hope there will be lustre enough in one or other of the names with which I shall gild my page to redeem the dulness of all that is merely personal in my recollections.

After leaving the school of Dame Prentiss, best remembered by infantine loves, those pretty preludes of more serious passions; by the great forfeit-basket, filled with its miscellaneous waifs and deodands, and by the

long willow stick by the aid of which the good old body, now stricken in years and unwieldy in person, could stimulate the sluggish faculties or check the mischievous sallies of the child most distant from her ample chair—a school where I think my most noted schoolmate was the present Bishop of Delaware—I became the pupil of Master William Biglow. This generation is not familiar with his title to renown, although he fills three columns and a half in Mr. Duyckinck's "Cyclopædia of American Literature." He was a humourist hardly robust enough for more than a brief local immortality. I am afraid we were an undistinguished set, for I do not remember anybody near a bishop in dignity graduating from our benches.

At about ten years of age I began going to what we always called the "Port School," because it was kept at Cambridgeport, a mile from the College. This surburb was at that time thinly inhabited, and, being much of it marshy and imperfectly reclaimed, had a dreary look as compared with the thriving College settlement. The tenants of the many beautiful mansions that have sprung up along Main Street, Harvard Street, and Broadway can hardly recall the time when, except the "Dana House" and the "Opposition House" and the "Clark House," these roads were almost all the way bordered by pastures until we reached the "stores" of Main Street, or were abreast of that forlorn "First Row" of Harvard Street. We called the boys of that locality "Port-chucks." They called us "Cambridge-chucks," but we got along very well together in the main.

Among my schoolmates at the Port School was a young girl of singular loveliness. I once before referred to her as "the golden blonde," but did not trust myself

to describe her charms. The day of her appearance in the school was almost as much a revelation to us boys as the appearance of Miranda was to Caliban. Her abounding natural curls were so full of sunshine, her skin was so delicately white, her smile and her voice were so all-subduing, that half our heads were turned. Her fascinations were everywhere confessed a few years afterwards; and when I last met her, though she said she was a grandmother, I questioned her statement, for her winning looks and ways would still have made her admired in any company.

Not far from the golden blonde were two small boys, one of them very small, perhaps the youngest boy in school, both ruddy, sturdy, quiet, reserved, sticking loyally by each other, the oldest, however, beginning to enter into social relations with us of somewhat maturer years. One of these two boys was destined to be widely known, first in literature, as author of one of the most popular books of its time and which is freighted for a long voyage; then as an eminent lawyer; a man who, if his countrymen are wise, will yet be prominent in the national councils. Richard Henry Dana, Junior, is the name he bore and bears; he found it famous, and will bequeath it a fresh renown.

Sitting on the girls' benches, conspicuous among the schoolgirls of unlettered origin by that look which rarely fails to betray hereditary and congenital culture, was a young person very nearly of my own age. She came with the reputation of being "smart," as we should have called it, clever as we say nowadays. This was Margaret Fuller, the only one among us who, like "Jean Paul," like "The Duke," like "Bettina," has slipped the cable of the more distinctive name to which she was anchored,

and floats on the waves of speech as "Margaret." Her air to her schoolmates was marked by a certain stateliness and distance, as if she had other thoughts than theirs and was not of them. She was a great student and a great reader of what she used to call "náw-véls." I remember her so well as she appeared at school and later, that I regret that she had not been faithfully given to canvas or marble in the day of her best looks. None know her aspect who have not seen her living. Margaret, as I remember her at school and afterward, was tall, fair complexioned, with a watery, aquamarine lustre in her light eyes, which she used to make small, as one does who looks at the sunshine. A remarkable point about her was that long, flexile neck, arching and undulating in strange sinuous movements, which one who loved her would compare to those of a swan, and one who loved her not to those of the ophidian who tempted our common mother. Her talk was affluent, magisterial, *de haut en bas*, some would say euphuistic, but surpassing the talk of women in breadth and audacity. Her face kindled and reddened and dilated in every feature as she spoke, and, as I once saw her in a fine storm of indignation at the supposed ill-treatment of a relative, showed itself capable of something resembling what Milton calls the viraginian aspect.

Little incidents bear telling when they recall anything of such a celebrity as Margaret. I remember being greatly awed once, in our school-days, with the maturity of one of her expressions. Some themes were brought home from the school for examination by my father, among them one of hers. I took it up with a certain emulous interest (for I fancied at that day that I too had drawn a prize, say a five-dollar one, at least,

in the great intellectual life-lottery) and read the first words.

"It is a trite remark," she began.

I stopped. Alas! I did not know what *trite* meant. How could I ever judge Margaret fairly after such a crushing discovery of her superiority? I doubt if I ever did; yet oh, how pleasant it would have been, at about the age, say, of threescore and ten, to rake over these ashes for cinders with her—she in a snowy cap, and I in a decent peruke!

After being five years at the Port School, the time drew near when I was to enter college. It seemed advisable to give me a year of higher training, and for that end some public school was thought to offer advantages. Phillips Academy at Andover was well known to us. We had been up there, my father and myself, at anniversaries. Some Boston boys of well-known and distinguished parentage had been scholars there very lately—Master Edmund Quincy, Master Samuel Hurd Walley, Master Nathaniel Parker Willis—all promising youth, who fulfilled their promise.

I do not believe there was any thought of getting a little respite of quiet by my temporary absence, but I have wondered that there was not. Exceptional boys of fourteen or fifteen make home a heaven, it is true; but I have suspected, late in life, that I was not one of the exceptional kind. I had tendencies in the direction of flageolets and octave flutes. I had a pistol and a gun, and popped at everything that stirred, pretty nearly, except the house-cat. Worse than this, I would buy a cigar and smoke it by instalments, putting it meantime in the barrel of my pistol, by a stroke of ingenuity which it gives me a grim pleasure to recall; for no maternal or

other female eyes would explore the cavity of that dread implement in search of contraband commodities.

It was settled, then, that I should go to Phillips Academy, and preparations were made that I might join the school at the beginning of the autumn.

In due time I took my departure in the old carriage, a little modernised from the pattern of my Lady Bountiful's, and we jogged soberly along—kind parents and slightly nostalgic boy—toward the seat of learning, some twenty miles away. Up the old West Cambridge road, now North Avenue; past Davenport's tavern, with its sheltering tree and swinging sign; past the old powder-house, looking like a colossal conical ball set on end; past the old Tidd House, one of the finest of the ante-Revolutionary mansions; past Miss Swan's great square boarding-school, where the music of girlish laughter was ringing through the windy corridors; so on to Stoneham, town of the bright lake, then darkened with the recent memory of the barbarous murder done by its lonely shore; through pleasant Reading, with its oddly named village centres—"Trapelo," "Read'nwoodeend," as rustic speech had it, and the rest; through Wilmington, then renowned for its hops; so at last into the hallowed borders of the academic town.

It was a shallow, two-story white house before which we stopped, just at the entrance of the central village, the residence of a very worthy professor in the theological seminary—learned, amiable, exemplary, but thought by certain experts to be a little questionable in the matter of homoousianism, or some such doctrine. There was a great rock that showed its round back in the narrow front yard. It looked cold and hard; but it hinted firmness and indifference to the sentiments fast

struggling to get uppermost in my youthful bosom; for I was not too old for home-sickness—who is? The carriage and my fond companions had to leave me at last. I saw it go down the declivity that sloped southward, then climb the next ascent, then sink gradually until the window in the back of it disappeared like an eye that shuts, and leaves the world dark to some widowed heart.

Sea-sickness and home-sickness are hard to deal with by any remedy but time. Mine was not a bad case, but it excited sympathy. There was an ancient, faded old lady in the house, very kindly, but very deaf, rustling about in dark autumnal foliage of silk or other murmurous fabric, somewhat given to snuff, but a very worthy gentlewoman of the poor-relation variety. She comforted me, I well remember, but not with apples, and stayed me, but not with flagons. She went in her benevolence, and, taking a blue and white soda-powder, mingled the same in water, and encouraged me to drink the result. It might be a specific for sea-sickness, but it was not for home-sickness. The *fiz* was a mockery, and the saline refrigerant struck a colder chill to my despondent heart. I did not disgrace myself, however, and a few days cured me, as a week on the water often cures sea-sickness.

There was a sober-faced boy of minute dimensions in the house, who began to make some advances to me, and who, in spite of all the conditions surrounding him, turned out, on better acquaintance, to be one of the most amusing, free-spoken, mocking little imps I ever met in my life. My room-mate came later. He was the son of a clergyman in a neighbouring town—in fact I may remark that I knew a good many clergymen's

sons at Andover. He and I went in harness together as well as most boys do, I suspect; and I have no grudge against him, except that once, when I was slightly indisposed, he administered to me—with the best intentions, no doubt—a dose of Indian pills, which effectually knocked me out of time, as Mr. Morrissey would say, not quite into eternity, but so near it that I perfectly remember one of the good ladies told me (after I had come to my senses a little, and was just ready for a sip of cordial and a word of encouragement), with that delightful plainness of speech which so brings realities home to the imagination, that "I never should look any whiter when I was laid out as a corpse." After my room-mate and I had been separated twenty-five years, fate made us fellowtownsmen and acquaintances once more in Berkshire, and now again we are close literary neighbours; for I have just read a very pleasant article, signed by him, in the last number of the "Galaxy." Does it not sometimes seem as if we were all marching round and round in a circle, like the supernumeraries who constitute the "army" of a theatre, and that each of us meets and is met by the same and only the same people, or their doubles, twice, thrice, or a little oftener, before the curtain drops and the "army" puts off its borrowed clothes?

The old Academy building had a dreary look, with its flat face, bare and uninteresting as our own "University Building" at Cambridge, since the piazza which relieved its monotony was taken away, and, to balance the ugliness thus produced, the hideous projection was added to "Harvard Hall." Two masters sat at the end of the great room—the principal and his assistant. Two others presided in separate rooms—one of them the late

Rev. Samuel Horatio Stearns, an excellent and lovable man, who looked kindly on me, and for whom I always cherished a sincere regard—a clergyman's son, too, which privilege I did not always find the warrant of signal virtues; but no matter about that here, and I have promised myself to be amiable.

On the side of the long room was a large clock-dial, bearing these words:—

YOUTH IS THE SEED TIME OF LIFE.

I had indulged in a prejudice, up to that hour, that youth was the budding time of life, and this clock-dial, perpetually twitting me with its seedy moral, always had a forbidding look to my vernal apprehension.

I was put into a seat with an older and much bigger boy, or youth, with a fuliginous complexion, a dilating and whitening nostril, and a singularly malignant scowl. Many years afterwards he committed an act of murderous violence, and ended by going to finish his days in a madhouse. His delight was to kick my shins with all his might, under the desk, not at all as an act of hostility, but as a gratifying and harmless pastime. Finding this, so far as I was concerned, equally devoid of pleasure and profit, I managed to get a seat by another boy, the son of a very distinguished divine. He was bright enough and more select in his choice of recreations, at least during school hours, than my late homicidal neighbour. But the principal called me up presently, and cautioned me against him as a dangerous companion. Could it be so? If the son of that boy's father could not be trusted what boy in Christendom could? It seemed like the story of the youth doomed to be slain by a lion before reaching a certain age, and whose fate found him out

in the heart of the tower where his father had shut him up for safety. Here was I, in the very dove's nest of Puritan faith, and out of one of its eggs a serpent had been hatched and was trying to nestle in my bosom! I parted from him, however, none the worse for his companionship so far as I can remember.

Of the boys who were at school with me at Andover one has acquired great distinction among the scholars of the land. One day I observed a new boy in a seat not very far from my own. He was a little fellow, as I recollect him, with black hair and very bright black eyes, when at length I got a chance to look at them. Of all the new-comers during my whole year he was the only one whom the first glance fixed in my memory, but there he is now, at this moment, just as he caught my eye on the morning of his entrance. His head was between his hands (I wonder if he does not sometimes study in that same posture nowadays!) and his eyes were fastened to his book as if he had been reading a will that made him heir to a million. I feel sure that Professor Horatio Balch Hackett will not find fault with me for writing his name under this inoffensive portrait. Thousands of faces and forms that I have known more or less familiarly have faded from my remembrance, but this presentment of the youthful student, sitting there entranced over the page of his text-book—the child-father of the distinguished scholar that was to be—is not a picture framed and hung up in my mind's gallery, but a fresco on its walls, there to remain so long as they hold together.

My especial intimate was a fine, rosy-faced boy, not quite so free of speech as myself, perhaps, but with qualities that promised a noble manhood, and ripened

into it in due season. His name was Phinehas Barnes, and, if he is inquired after in Portland or anywhere in the State of Maine, something will be heard to his advantage from an honest and intelligent citizen of that Commonwealth who answers the question. This was one of two or three friendships that lasted. There were other friends and classmates, one of them a natural humorist of the liveliest sort, who would have been quarantined in any Puritan port, his laugh was so potently contagious.

Of the noted men of Andover the one whom I remember best was Professor Moses Stuart. His house was nearly opposite the one in which I resided and I often met him and listened to him in the chapel of the Seminary. I have seen few more striking figures in my life than his, as I remember it. Tall, lean, with strong, bold features, a keen, scholarly, accipitrine nose, thin, expressive lips, great solemnity and impressiveness of voice and manner, he was my early model of a classic orator. His air was Roman, his neck long and bare like Cicero's, and his *toga*—that is his broadcloth cloak—was carried on his arm, whatever might have been the weather, with such a statue-like rigid grace that he might have been turned into marble as he stood, and looked noble by the side of the antiques of the Vatican.

Dr. Porter was an invalid, with the prophetic handkerchief bundling his throat, and his face "festooned" —as I heard Hillard say once, speaking of one of our College professors—in folds and wrinkles. Ill health gives a certain common character to all faces, as Nature has a fixed course which she follows in dismantling a human countenance: the noblest and the fairest is but a death's-head decently covered over for the transient

ceremony of life, and the drapery often falls half off before the procession has passed.

Dr. Woods looked his creed more decidedly, perhaps, than any of the Professors. He had the firm fibre of a theological athlete, and lived to be old without ever mellowing, I think, into a kind of half-heterodoxy, as old ministers of stern creed are said to do now and then—just as old doctors grow to be sparing of the more exasperating drugs in their later days. He had manipulated the mysteries of the Infinite so long and so exhaustively, that he would have seemed more at home among the mediæval schoolmen than amidst the working clergy of our own time.

All schools have their great men, for whose advent into life the world is waiting in dumb expectancy. In due time the world seizes upon these wondrous youth, opens the shell of their possibilities like the valves of an oyster, swallows them at a gulp, and they are for the most part heard of no more. We had two great men, grown up both of them. Which was the more awful intellectual power to be launched upon society, we debated. Time cut the knot in his rude fashion by taking one away early, and padding the other with prosperity so that his course was comparatively noiseless and ineffective. We had our societies, too; one in particular, "The Social Fraternity," the dread secrets of which I am under a lifelong obligation never to reveal. The fate of William Morgan, which the community learned not long after this time, reminds me of the danger of the ground upon which I am treading.

There were various distractions to make the time not passed in study a season of relief. One good lady, I

was told, was in the habit of asking students to her house on Saturday afternoons and praying with and for them. Bodily exercise was not, however, entirely superseded by spiritual exercises, and a rudimentary form of base-ball and the heroic sport of football were followed with some spirit.

A slight immature boy finds his materials of thought and enjoyment in very shallow and simple sources. Yet a kind of romance gilds for me the sober table-land of that cold New England hill where I came in contact with a world so strange to me, and destined to leave such mingled and lasting impressions. I looked across the valley to the hillside where Methuen hung suspended, and dreamed of its wooded seclusion as a village paradise. I tripped lightly down the long northern slope with *facilis descensus* on my lips, and toiled up again, repeating *sed revocare gradum*. I wandered in the autumnal woods that crown the "Indian Ridge," much wondering at that vast embankment, which we young philosophers believed with the vulgar to be of aboriginal workmanship, not less curious, perhaps, since we call it an escar, and refer it to alluvial agencies. The little Shawshine was our swimming-school, and the great Merrimack, the right arm of four toiling cities, was within reach of a morning stroll. At home we had the small imp to make us laugh at his enormities, for he spared nothing in his talk, and was the drollest little living protest against the prevailing solemnities of the locality. It did not take much to please us, I suspect, and it is a blessing that this is apt to be so with young people. What else could have made us think it great sport to leave our warm beds in the middle of winter and "camp out"—on the floor of our room—with blankets disposed tent-wise,

except the fact that to a boy a new discomfort in place of an old comfort is often a luxury.

More exciting occupation than any of these was to watch one of the preceptors to see if he would not drop dead while he was praying. He had a dream one night that he should, and looked upon it as a warning, and told it round very seriously, and asked the boys to come and visit him in turn, as one whom they were soon to lose. More than one boy kept his eye on him during his public devotions, possessed by the same feeling the man had who followed Van Amburgh about with the expectation, let us not say the hope, of seeing the lion bite his head off sooner or later.

Let me not forget to recall the interesting visit to Haverhill with my room-mate, and how he led me to the mighty bridge over the Merrimack which defied the ice-rafts of the river; and to the old meeting-house, where, in its porch, I saw the door of the ancient parsonage, with the bullet-hole in it through which Benjamin Rolfe, the minister, was shot by the Indians on the 29th of August, 1708. What a vision it was when I awoke in the morning to see the fog on the river seeming as if it wrapped the towers and spires of a great city!—for such was my fancy, and whether it was a mirage of youth or a fantastic natural effect I hate to inquire too nicely.

My literary performances at Andover, if any reader who may have survived so far cares to know, included a translation from Virgil, out of which I remember this couplet, which had the inevitable cockney rhyme of beginners:

> Thus by the power of Jove's imperial *arm*
> The boiling ocean trembled into *calm*.

Also a discussion with Master Phinehas Barnes on the case of Mary, Queen of Scots, which he treated argumentatively and I rhetorically and sentimentally. My sentences were praised and his conclusions adopted. Also an Essay, spoken at the great final exhibition, held in the large hall upstairs, which hangs oddly enough from the roof, suspended by iron rods. Subject, *Fancy*. Treatment, brief but comprehensive, illustrating the magic power of that brilliant faculty in charming life into forgetfulness of all the ills that flesh is heir to—the gift of Heaven to every condition and every clime, from the captive in his dungeon to the monarch on his throne; from the burning sands of the desert to the frozen icebergs of the poles, from—but I forget myself.

This was the last of my coruscations at Andover. I went from the Academy to Harvard College, and did not visit the sacred hill again for a long time.

On the last day of August, 1867, not having been at Andover for many years, I took the cars at noon, and in an hour or a little more found myself at the station, just at the foot of the hill. My first pilgrimage was to the old elm, which I remembered so well as standing by the tavern, and of which they used to tell the story that it held, buried in it by growth, the iron rings put round it in the old time to keep the Indians from chopping it with their tomahawks. I then began the once familiar toil of ascending the long declivity. Academic villages seem to change very slowly. Once in a hundred years the library burns down with all its books. A new edifice or two may be put up, and a new library begun in the course of the same century; but these places are poor,

for the most part, and cannot afford to pull down their old barracks.

These sentimental journeys to old haunts must be made alone. The story of them must be told succinctly. It is like the opium-smoker's showing you the pipe from which he has just inhaled elysian bliss, empty of the precious extract which has given him his dream.

I did not care much for the new Academy building on my right, nor for the new library building on my left. But for these it was surprising to see how little the scene I remembered in my boyhood had changed. The Professor's houses looked just as they used to, and the stage-coach landed its passengers at the Mansion House as of old. The pale brick seminary buildings were behind me on the left, looking as if "Hollis" and "Stoughton" had been transplanted from Cambridge—carried there in the night by orthodox angels, perhaps, like the *Santa Casa*. Away to my left again, but abreast of me, was the bleak, bare old Academy building; and in front of me stood unchanged the shallow oblong white house where I lived a year in the days of James Monroe and of John Quincy Adams.

The ghost of a boy was at my side as I wandered among the places he knew so well. I went to the front of the house. There was the great rock showing its broad back in the front yard. *I used to crack nuts on that*, whispered the small ghost. I looked in at the upper window in the farther part of the house. *I looked out of that on four long changing seasons*, said the ghost. I should have liked to explore farther, but, while I was looking, one came into the small garden, or what used to be the garden, in front of the house, and I desisted from my investigation and went on my way. The

apparition that put me and my little ghost to flight had a dressing-gown on its person and a gun in its hand. I think it was the dressing-gown, and not the gun, which drove me off.

And now here is the shop, or store, that used to be Shipman's, after passing what I think used to be Jonathan Leavitt's bookbindery, and here is the back road that will lead me around by the old Academy building.

Could I believe my senses when I found that it was turned into a gymnasium, and heard the low thunder of ninepin balls, and the crash of tumbling pins from those precincts? The little ghost said, *Never! It cannot be.* But it was. "Have they a billiard-room in the upper story?" I asked myself. "Do the theological professors take a hand at all-fours or poker on week-days, now and then, and read the secular columns of the Boston *Recorder* on Sundays?" I was demoralised for the moment, it is plain; but now that I have recovered from the shock, I must say that the fact mentioned seems to show a great advance in common sense from the notions prevailing in my time.

I sauntered—we, rather, my ghost and I—until we came to a broken field where there was quarrying and digging going on—our old base-ball ground, hard by the burial-place. There I paused; and if any thoughtful boy who loves to tread in the footsteps that another has sown with memories of the time when he was young shall follow my footsteps, I need not ask him to rest here a while, for he will be enchained by the noble view before him. Far to the north and west the mountains of New Hampshire lifted their summits in a long encircling ridge of pale blue waves. The day was clear, and every mound and peak traced its outline with perfect definition

against the sky. This was a sight which had more virtue and refreshment in it than any aspect of nature that I had looked upon, I am afraid I must say for years. I have been by the seaside now and then, but the sea is constantly busy with its own affairs, running here and there, listening to what the winds have to say and getting angry with them, always indifferent, often insolent, and ready to do a mischief to those who seek its companionship. But these still, serene, unchanging mountains —Monadnock, Kearsarge—what memories that name recalls! and the others, the dateless Pyramids of New England, the eternal monuments of her ancient race, around which cluster the homes of so many of her bravest and hardiest children—I can never look at them without feeling that, vast and remote and awful as they are, there is a kind of inward heat and muffled throb in their stony cores, that brings them into a vague sort of sympathy with human hearts. It is more than a year since I have looked on those blue mountains, and they "are to me as a feeling" now, and have been ever since.

I had only to pass a wall and I was in the burial-ground. It was thinly tenanted as I remember it, but now populous with the silent immigrants of more than a whole generation. There lay the dead I had left—the two or three students of the Seminary; the son of the worthy pair in whose house I lived, for whom in those days hearts were still aching, and by whose memory the house still seemed haunted. A few upright stones were all that I recollect. But now, around them were the monuments of many of the dead whom I remembered as living. I doubt if there has been a more faithful reader of these graven stones than myself for many a long day. I listened to more than one brief sermon from preachers

whom I had often heard as they thundered their doctrines down upon me from the throne-like desk. Now they spoke humbly out of the dust, from a narrower pulpit, from an older text than any they ever found in Cruden's Concordance, but there was an eloquence in their voices the listening chapel had never known. There were stately monuments and studied inscriptions, but none so beautiful, none so touching, as that which hallows the resting-place of one of the children of the very learned Professor Robinson: "Is it well with the child? And she answered, It is well."

While I was musing amidst these scenes in the mood of Hamlet, two old men, as my little ghost called them, appeared on the scene to answer to the grave-digger and his companion. They christened a mountain or two for me, " Kearsarge " among the rest, and revived some old recollections, of which the most curious was "Basil's Cave." The story was recent, when I was there, of one Basil, or Bezill, or Buzzell, or whatever his name might have been, a member of the Academy, fabulously rich, Orientally extravagant, and of more or less lawless habits. He had commanded a cave to be secretly dug, and furnished it sumptuously, and there with his companions indulged in revelries such as the daylight of that consecrated locality had never looked upon. How much truth there was in it all I will not pretend to say, but I seem to remember stamping over every rock that sounded hollow, to question if it were not the roof of what was once Basil's Cave.

The sun was getting far past the meridian, and I sought a shelter under which to partake of the hermit fare I had brought with me. Following the slope of the hill northward behind the cemetery, I found a pleasant clump of

trees grouped about some rocks, disposed so as to give a table, and a shade. I left my benediction on this pretty little natural caravanserai, and a brief record on one of its white birches, hoping to visit it again on some sweet summer or autumn day.

Two scenes remained to look upon—the Shawshine River and the Indian Ridge. The streamlet proved to have about the width with which it flowed through my memory. The young men and the boys were bathing in its shallow current, or dressing and undressing upon its banks as in the days of old; the same river, only the water changed; "The same boys, only the names and the accidents of local memory different," I whispered to my little ghost.

The Indian Ridge more than equalled what I expected of it. It is well worth a long ride to visit. The lofty wooded bank is a mile and a half in extent, with other ridges in its neighbourhood, in general running nearly parallel with it, one of them still longer. These singular formations are supposed to have been built up by the eddies of conflicting currents scattering sand and gravel and stones as they swept over the continent. But I think they pleased me better when I was taught that the Indians built them; and while I thank Professor Hitchcock, I sometimes feel as if I should like to found a chair to teach the ignorance of what people do not want to know.

"Two tickets to Boston," I said to the man at the station.

But the little ghost whispered, "*When you leave this place you leave me behind you.*"

"*One* ticket to Boston, if you please. Good-bye, little ghost."

I believe the boy-shadow still lingers around the well-remembered scenes I traversed on that day, and that, whenever I revisit them, I shall find him again as my companion.

—Oliver Wendell Holmes.

XI

RAIN IN THE GARRET*

IT IS an old garret with big, brown rafters; and the boards between are stained darkly with the rain-storms of fifty years. And as the sportive April shower quickens its flood, it seems as if its torrents would come dashing through the shingles, upon you, and upon your play. But it will not; for you know that the old roof is strong; and that it has kept you, and all that love you, for long years from the rain, and from the cold; you know that the hardest storms of winter will only make a little oozing leak, that trickles down the brown stains—like tears.

You love that old garret roof; and you nestle down under its slope, with a sense of its protecting power that no castle walls can give to your maturer years. Ay, your heart clings in boyhood to the roof-tree of the old family garret, with a grateful affection, and an earnest confidence, that the after-years—whatever may be their successes or their honours—can never re-create. Under the roof-tree of his home, the boy feels SAFE: and where, in the whole realm of life, with its bitter toil, and its bitterer temptations, will he feel *safe* again?

But this you do not know. It seems only a grand old place; and it is capital fun to search in its corners, and drag out some bit of quaint old furniture, with a leg

* From "Dream Life." Copyright, 1851, 1863, 1883, by Donald G. Mitchell. Published by Charles Scribner's Sons.

broken, and lay a cushion across it, and fix your reins upon the lion's claws of the feet, and then—gallop away! And you offer sister Nelly a chance, if she will be good; and throw out very patronising words to little Charlie, who is mounted upon a much humbler horse—to wit, a decrepit nursery-chair—as he of right should be, since he is three years your junior.

I know no nobler forage ground for a romantic, venturesome, mischievous boy, than the garret of an old family mansion, on a day of storm. It is a perfect field of chivalry. The heavy rafters, and dashing rain, the piles of spare mattresses to carouse upon, the big trunks to hide in, the old white coats and hats hanging in obscure corners like ghosts—are great! And it is so far away from the old lady, who keeps rule in the nursery, that there is no possible risk of a scolding, for twisting off the fringe of the rug. There is no baby in the garret to wake up. There is no "company" in the garret to be disturbed by the noise. There is no crotchety old Uncle, or Grand-Ma, with their everlasting—"Boys—boys!"—and then a look of such horror!

There is great fun in groping through a tall barrel of books and pamphlets, on the look-out for startling pictures; and there are chestnuts in the garret, drying, which you have discovered on a ledge of the chimney; and you slide a few into your pocket, and munch them quietly—giving now and then one to Nelly, and begging her to keep silent—for you have a great fear of its being forbidden fruit.

Old family garrets have their stock, as I said, of cast-away clothes, of twenty years gone by; and it is rare sport to put them on; buttoning in a pillow or two for the sake of good fulness; and then to trick out Nelly in

some strange-shaped head-gear, and old-fashioned brocade petticoat caught up with pins; and in such guise, to steal cautiously down stairs, and creep slily into the sitting-room—half afraid of a scolding, and very sure of good fun;—trying to look very sober, and yet almost ready to die with the laugh that you know you will make. And your mother tries to look harshly at little Nelly for putting on her grandmother's best bonnet; but Nelly's laughing eyes forbid it utterly; and the mother spoils all her scolding with a perfect shower of kisses.

After this, you go marching, very stately, into the nursery; and utterly amaze the old nurse; and make a deal of wonderment for the staring, half-frightened baby, who drops his rattle, and makes a bob at you, as if he would jump into your waistcoat pocket.

But you grow tired of this; you tire even of the swing, and of the pranks of Charlie; and you glide away into a corner, with an old, dog's-eared copy of Robinson Crusoe. And you grow heart and soul into the story, until you tremble for the poor fellow with his guns, behind the palisade; and are yourself half dead with fright, when you peep cautiously over the hill with your glass, and see the cannibals at their orgies around the fire.

Yet, after all, you think the old fellow must have had a capital time, with a whole island to himself; and you think you would like such a time yourself, if only Nelly, and Charlie, could be there with you. But this thought does not come till afterward; for the time, you are nothing but Crusoe; you are living in his cave with Poll the parrot, and are looking out for your goats and man Friday.

You dream what a nice thing it would be, for you to slip away some pleasant morning—not to York, as young Crusoe did, but to New York—and take passage as a

sailor; and how, if they knew you were going, there would be such a world of good-byes; and how, if they did not know it, there would be such a world of wonder!

And then the sailor's dress would be altogether such a jaunty affair; and it would be such rare sport to lie off upon the yards far aloft, as you have seen sailors in pictures, looking out upon the blue and tumbling sea. No thought now, in your boyish dreams, of sleety storms, and cables stiffened with ice, and crashing spars, and great icebergs towering fearfully around you!

You would have better luck than even Crusoe; you would save a compass, and a Bible, and stores of hatchets, and the captain's dog, and great puncheons of sweetmeats (which Crusoe altogether overlooked); and you would save a tent or two, which you could set up on the shore, and an American flag, and a small piece of cannon, which you could fire as often as you liked. At night, you would sleep in a tree—though you wonder how Crusoe did it—and would say the prayers you had been taught to say at home, and fall to sleep—dreaming of Nelly and Charlie.

At sunrise, or thereabouts, you would come down, feeling very much refreshed; and make a very nice breakfast off of smoked herring and sea-bread, with a little currant jam and a few oranges. After this you would haul ashore a chest or two of the sailors' clothes, and putting a few large jack-knives in your pocket, would take a stroll over the island, and dig a cave somewhere, and roll in a cask or two of sea-bread. And you fancy yourself growing after a time very tall and corpulent, and wearing a magnificent goat-skin cap, trimmed with green ribbons, and set off with a plume. You think you would have put a few more guns in the palisade than Crusoe did, and charged them with a little more grape.

After a long while, you fancy a ship would arrive, which would carry you back; and you count upon very great surprise on the part of your father, and little Nelly, as you march up to the door of the old family mansion, with plenty of gold in your pocket, and a small bag of cocoanuts for Charlie, and with a great deal of pleasant talk about your island, far away in the South Seas.

—Or, perhaps it is not Crusoe at all, that your eyes and your heart cling to, but only some little story about Paul and Virginia. That dear little Virginia! how many tears have been shed over her—not in garrets only, or by boys only!

You would have liked Virginia—you know you would; but you perfectly hate the beldame aunt, who sent for her to come to France; you think she must have been like the old school-mistress, who occasionally boxes your ears with the cover of the spelling-book, or makes you wear one of the girl's bonnets, that smells strongly of paste-board, and calico.

As for black Domingue, you think he was a capital old fellow; and you think more of him, and his bananas, than you do of the bursting, throbbing heart of poor Paul. As yet, Dream-life does not take hold on love. A little maturity of heart is wanted, to make up what the poets call sensibility. If love should come to be a dangerous, chivalric matter, as in the case of Helen Mar and Wallace, you can very easily conceive of it, and can take hold of all the little accessories of male costume, and embroidering of banners; but as for pure sentiment, such as lies in the sweet story of Bernardin de St. Pierre, it is quite beyond you.

The rich, soft nights, in which one might doze in his hammock, watching the play of the silvery moonbeams

upon the orange leaves and upon the waves, you can understand; and you fall to dreaming of that lovely Isle of France; and wondering if Virginia did not perhaps have some relations on the island, who raise pine-apples, and such sort of things, still?

—And so, with your head upon your hand, in your quiet garret corner, over some such beguiling story, your thought leans away from the book, into your own dreamy cruise over the sea of life.

—Donald G. Mitchell.

XII

SCHOOL DREAMS*

IT IS a proud thing to go out from under the realm of a schoolmistress, and to be enrolled in a company of boys who are under the guidance of a master. It is one of the earliest steps of worldly pride, which has before it a long and tedious ladder or ascent. Even the advice of the old mistress, and the nine-penny book that she thrusts into your hand as a parting gift, pass for nothing; and her kiss of adieu, if she tenders it in the sight of your fellows, will call up an angry rush of blood to the cheek, that for long years shall drown all sense of its kindness.

You have looked admiringly many a day upon the tall fellows who play at the door of Dr. Bidlow's school: you have looked with reverence, second only to that felt for the old village church, upon its dark-looking heavy brick walls. It seemed to be redolent of learning; and stopping at times, to gaze upon the gallipots and broken retorts, at the second story window, you have pondered, in your boyish way, upon the inscrutable wonders of Science, and the ineffable dignity of Dr. Bidlow's brick school!

Dr. Bidlow seems to you to belong to a race of giants; and yet he is a spare, thin man, with a hooked nose, a large, flat, gold watch-key, a crack in his voice, a wig,

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and very dirty wristbands. Still you stand in awe at the mere sight of him;—an awe that is very much encouraged by a report made to you by a small boy—that "Old Bid" keeps a large ebony ruler in his desk. You are amazed at the small boy's audacity: it astonishes you that any one who had ever smelt the strong fumes of sulphur and ether in the Doctor's room, and had seen him turn red vinegar blue (as they say he does), should call him "Old Bid!"

You, however, come very little under his control: you enter upon the proud life, in the small boy's department—under the dominion of the English master. He is a different personage from Dr. Bidlow: he is a dapper little man, who twinkles his eye in a peculiar fashion, who has a way of marching about the school-room with his hands crossed behind him, giving a playful flirt to his coat-tails. He wears a pen tucked behind his ear: his hair is carefully set up at the sides, and upon the top, to conceal (as you think later in life) his diminutive height; and he steps very springily around behind the benches, glancing now and then at the books—cautioning one scholar about his dogs-ears, and starting another from a doze, by a very loud and odious snap of his forefinger upon the boy's head.

At other times, he sticks a hand in the armlet of his waistcoat: he brandishes in the other a thickish bit of smooth cherry-wood—sometimes dressing his hair withal; and again, giving his head a slight scratch behind the ear, while he takes occasion at the same time for an oblique glance at a fat boy in the corner, who is reaching down from his seat after a little paper pellet, that has just been discharged at him from some unknown quarter. The master steals very cautiously and quickly to the

rear of the stooping boy—dreadfully exposed by his unfortunate position—and inflicts a stinging blow. A weak-eyed little scholar on the next bench ventures a modest titter; at which the assistant makes a significant motion with his ruler—on the seat, as it were, of an imaginary pair of pantaloons—which renders the weak-eyed boy, on a sudden, very insensible to the recent joke.

You, meantime, profess to be very much engrossed with your grammar—turned upside down: you think it must have hurt; and are only sorry that it did not happen to a tall, dark-faced boy who cheated you in a swop of jack-knives. You innocently think that he must be a very bad boy; and fancy—aided by a suggestion of the old nurse at home, on the same point—that he will one day come to the gallows.

There is a platform on one side of the school-room, where the teacher sits at a little red table, and they have a tradition among the boys, that a pin, properly bent, was one day put into the chair of the English master, and that he did not wear his hand in the armlet of his waistcoat for two whole days thereafter. Yet his air of dignity seems proper enough in a man of such erudition, and such grasp of imagination, as he must possess. For he can quote poetry—some of the big scholars have heard him do it:—he can parse the whole of Paradise Lost; and he can cipher in Long Division, and the Rule of Three, as if it was all Simple Addition; and then—such a hand as he writes, and such a superb capital B! It is hard to understand how he does it.

Sometimes, lifting the lid of your desk, where you pretend to be very busy with your papers, you steal the reading of some brief passage of Lazy Lawrence, or of the Hungarian Brothers, and muse about it for hours

afterward, to the great detriment of your ciphering; or, deeply lost in the story of the Scottish Chiefs, you fall to comparing such villains as Menteith with the stout boys who tease you; and you only wish they could come within reach of the fierce Kirkpatrick's claymore.

But you are frightened out of this stolen reading by a circumstance that stirs your young blood very strangely. The master is looking very sourly on a certain morning, and has caught sight of the little weak-eyed boy over beyond you, reading Roderick Random. He sends out for a long birch rod, and having trimmed off the leaves carefully—with a glance or two in your direction—he marches up behind the bench of the poor culprit—who turns deathly pale—grapples him by the collar, drags him out over the desks, his limbs dangling in a shocking way against the sharp angles, and having him fairly in the middle of the room, clinches his rod with a new, and, as it seems to you, a very sportive grip.

You shudder fearfully.

"Please don't whip me," says the boy whimpering.

"Aha!" says the smirking pedagogue, bringing down the stick with a quick, sharp cut—"you don't like it, eh?"

The poor fellow screams, and struggles to escape; but the blows come faster and thicker. The blood tingles in your finger ends with indignation.

"Please don't strike me again," says the boy sobbing and taking breath, as he writhes about the legs of the master;—"I won't read another time."

"Ah, you won't, sir—won't you? I don't mean you shall, sir," and the blows fall thick and fast—until the poor fellow crawls back, utterly crest-fallen and heart-sick, to sob over his books.

You grow into a sudden boldness: you wish you were only large enough to beat the master: you know such treatment would make you miserable: you shudder at the thought of it: you do not believe he would dare: you know the other boy has got no father. This seems to throw a new light upon the matter, but it only intensifies your indignation. You are sure that no father would suffer it; or if you thought so, it would sadly weaken your love for him. You pray Heaven that it may never be brought to such proof.

Let a boy once distrust the love or the tenderness of his parents, and the last resort of his yearning affections—so far as the world goes—is utterly gone. He is in the sure road to a bitter fate. His heart will take on a hard iron covering, that will flash out plenty of fire in his after contact with the world, but it will never—never melt!

There are some tall trees that overshadow an angle of the school-house: and the larger scholars play some very surprising gymnastic tricks upon their lower limbs: one boy, for instance, will hang for an incredible length of time by his feet, with his head down; and when you tell Charlie of it at night, with such additions as your boyish imagination can contrive, the old nurse is shocked, and states very gravely that it is dangerous; and that the blood all runs to the head, and sometimes bursts out of the eyes and mouth. You look at that particular boy with astonishment afterward; and expect to see him some day burst into bleeding from the nose and ears, and flood the school-room benches.

In time, however, you get to performing some modest experiments yourself upon the very lowest limbs,—taking care to avoid the observation of the larger boys,

who else might laugh at you: you especially avoid the notice of one stout fellow in pea-green breeches, who is a sort of "bully" among the small boys, and who delights in kicking your marbles about, very accidentally. He has a fashion too of twisting his handkerchief into what he calls a "snapper," with a knot at the end, and cracking at you with it, very much to the irritation of your spirits, and of your legs.

Sometimes, when he has brought you to an angry burst of tears, he will very graciously force upon you the handkerchief, and insist upon your cracking him in return; which, as you know nothing about his effective method of making a knot bite, is a very harmless proposal on his part.

But you have still stronger reason to remember that boy. There are trees, as I said, near the school; and you get the reputation after a time of a good climber. One day you are well in the tops of the trees, and being dared by the boys below, you venture higher—higher than any boy has ever gone before. You feel very proudly; but just then catch sight of the sneering face of your old enemy of the snapper; and he dares you to go upon a limb that he points out.

The rest say—for you hear them plainly—"it won't bear him." And Frank, a great friend of yours, shouts loudly to you—not to try.

"Pho," says your tormentor—"the little coward!"

If you could whip him, you would go down the tree and do it willingly: as it is, you cannot let him triumph: so you advance cautiously out upon the limb: it bends and sways fearfully with your weight: presently it cracks: you try to return, but it is too late: you feel yourself going:—your mind flashes home—over your

life—your hope—your fate, like lightning: then comes a sense of dizziness—a succession of quick blows, and a dull, heavy crash!

You are conscious of nothing again, until you find yourself in the great hall of the school, covered with blood, the old Doctor standing over you with a phial, and Frank kneeling by you, and holding your shattered arm, which has been broken by the fall.

After this, come those long, weary days of confinement, when you lie still, through all the hours of noon, looking out upon the cheerful sunshine only through the windows of your little room. Yet it seems a grand thing to have the whole household attendant upon you. The doors are opened and shut softly, and they all step noiselessly about your chamber; and when you groan with pain, you are sure of meeting sad, sympathising looks. Your mother will step gently to your side and lay her cool, white hand upon your forehead; and little Nelly will gaze at you from the foot of your bed with a sad earnestness, and with tears of pity in her soft hazel eyes. And afterward, as your pain passes away, she will bring you her prettiest books, and fresh flowers, and whatever she knows you will love.

But it is dreadful, when you wake at night from your feverish slumber, and see nothing but the spectral shadows that the sick-lamp upon the hearth throws aslant the walls; and hear nothing but the heavy breathing of the old nurse in the easy chair, and the ticking of the clock upon the mantel! Then, silence and the night crowd upon your soul drearily. But your thought is active. It shapes at your bedside the loved figure of your mother, or it calls up the whole company of Dr. Bidlow's boys; and weeks of study or of play group

like magic on your quickened vision—then, a twinge of pain will call again the dreariness, and your head tosses upon the pillow, and your eye searches the gloom vainly for pleasant faces; and your fears brood on that drearier coming night of Death—far longer, and far more cheerless than this.

But even here, the memory of some little prayer you have been taught, which promises a Morning after the Night, comes to your throbbing brain; and its murmur on your fevered lips, as you breathe it, soothes like a caress of angels, and woos you to smiles and sleep.

As the days pass, you grow stronger; and Frank comes in to tell you of the school, and that your old tormentor has been expelled: and you grow into a strong friendship with Frank, and you think of yourselves as a new Damon and Pythias—and that you will some day live together in a fine house, with plenty of horses, and plenty of chestnut trees. Alas, the boy counts little on those later and bitter fates of life, which sever his early friendships like wisps of straw!

At other times, with your eye upon the sleek, trim figure of the Doctor, and upon his huge bunch of watch seals, you think you will some day be a Doctor; and that with a wife and children, and a respectable gig, and gold watch, with seals to match, you would needs be a very happy fellow.

And with such fancies drifting on your thought, you count for the hundredth time the figures upon the curtains of your bed—you trace out the flower wreaths upon the paper-hangings of your room—your eyes rest idly on the cat playing with the fringe of the curtain—you see your mother sitting with her needlework beside the

fire—you watch the sunbeams as they drift along the carpet, from morning until noon; and from noon till night, you watch them playing on the leaves, and dropping spangles on the lawn; and as you watch—you dream.

—Donald G. Mitchell.

XIII

CATS

ONE evening before dinner-time the present writer had occasion to go into a dining-room where the cloth was already laid, the glasses all in their places on the sideboard and table, and the lamp and candles lighted. A cat, which was a favourite in the house, finding the door ajar, entered softly after me, and began to make a little exploration after his manner. I have a fancy for watching animals when they think they are not observed, so I affected to be entirely absorbed in the occupation which detained me there, but took note of the cat's proceedings without in any way interrupting them. The first thing he did was to jump upon a chair, and thence upon the sideboard. There was a good deal of glass and plate upon that piece of furniture, but nothing as yet which, in the cat's opinion, was worth purloining; so he brought all his paws together on the very edge of the board, the two forepaws in the middle, the others on both sides, and sat balancing himself in that attitude for a minute or two, whilst he contemplated the long glittering vista of the table. As yet there was not an atom of anything eatable upon it, but the cat probably thought he might as well ascertain whether this were so or not by a closer inspection, for with a single spring he cleared the abyss and alighted noiselessly on the table-cloth. He walked all over it and left no trace; he passed amongst the slender glasses, fragile-stemmed, like air

bubbles cut in half and balanced on spears of ice; yet he disturbed nothing, broke nothing, anywhere. When his inspection was over he slipped out of sight, having been perfectly inaudible from the beginning, so that a blind person could only have suspected his visit by that mysterious sense which makes the blind aware of the presence of another creature.

This little scene reveals one remarkable characteristic of the feline nature, the innate and exquisite refinement of its behaviour. It would be infinitely difficult, probably even impossible, to communicate a delicacy of this kind to any animal by teaching. The cat is a creature of most refined and subtle perceptions naturally. Why should she tread so carefully? It is not from fear of offending her master and incurring punishment, but because to do so is in comformity with her own ideal of behaviour; exactly as a lady would feel vexed with herself if she broke anything in her own drawing-room though no one would blame her *maladresse* and she would never feel the loss.

The contrast in this respect between cats and other animals is very striking. I will not wrong the noble canine nature so far as to say that it has no delicacy, but its delicacy is not of this kind, not in actual touch, as the cat's is. The motions of the cat, being always governed by the most refined sense of touch in the animal world, are typical in quite a perfect way of what we call tact in the human world. And as a man who has tact exercises it on all occasions for his own satisfaction, even when there is no positive need for it, so a cat will walk daintily and observantly everywhere, whether amongst the glasses on a dinner-table or the rubbish in a farmyard.

It is easy to detract from the admirableness of this delicate quality in the cat by a reference to the necessities of her life in a wild state. Any one not much disposed to enter into imaginative sentimentalities about animals might say to us, "What you admire so much as a proof of ladylike civilisation in the cat, is rather an evidence that she has retained her savage habits. When she so carefully avoids the glasses on the dinner-table she is not thinking of her behaviour as a dependent on civilised man, but acting in obedience to hereditary habits of caution in stealthy chase, which is the natural accomplishment of her species. She will stir no branch of a shrub lest her fated bird escape her, and her feet are noiseless that the mouse may not know of her coming." This, no doubt, would be a probable account of the origin of that fineness of touch and movement which belongs to cats, but the fact of that fineness remains. In all the domestic animals, and in man himself, there are instincts and qualities still more or less distinctly traceable to a savage state, and these qualities are often the very basis of civilisation itself. That which in the wild cat is but the stealthy cunning of the hunter, is refined in the tame one into a habitual gentleness often very agreeable to ladies, who dislike the boisterous demonstrations of the dog and his incorrigible carelessness.

This quality of extreme caution, which makes the cat avoid obstacles that a dog would dash through without a thought, makes her at the same time somewhat reserved and suspicious in all the relations of her life. If a cat has been allowed to run half-wild this suspicion can never be overcome. There was a numerous population of cats in this half-wild state for some years in the garrets of my house. Some of these were exceedingly

fine, handsome animals, and I very much wished to get them into the rooms we inhabited, and so domesticate them; but all my blandishments were useless. The nearest approach to success was in the case of a superb white-and-black animal, who, at last, would come to me occasionally, and permit me to caress his head, because I scratched him behind the ears. Encouraged by this measure of confidence, I went so far on one occasion as to lift him a few inches from the ground: on which he behaved himself very much like a wild cat just trapped in the woods, and for some days after it was impossible even to get near him. He never came downstairs in a regular way, but communicated with the outer world by means of roofs and trees, like the other untamable creatures in the garrets. On returning home after an absence I sought him vainly, and have never encountered him since.

This individual lived on the confines of civilisation, and it is possible that his tendency to friendliness might have been developed into a feeling more completely trustful by greater delicacy and care. I happened to mention him to an hotel-keeper who was unusually fond of animals, and unusually successful in winning their affections. He told me that his own cats were remarkable for their uncommon tameness, being very much petted and caressed, and constantly in the habit of seeing numbers of people who came to the hotel, and he advised me to try a kitten of his breed. This kitten, from hereditary civilisation, behaved with the utmost confidence from the beginning, and, with the exception of occasional absences for his own purposes, has lived with me regularly enough. In winter he generally sleeps upon my dog, who submits in patience; and I have often found

him on horseback in the stable, not from any taste for equestrianism, but simply because a horsecloth is a perpetual warmer when there is a living horse beneath it.

All who have written upon cats are unanimous in the opinion that their caressing ways bear reference simply to themselves. My cat loves the dog and horse exactly with the tender sentiment we have for foot-warmers and railway rugs during a journey in the depth of winter, nor have I ever been able to detect any worthier feeling toward his master. Ladies are often fond of cats, and pleasantly encourage the illusion that they are affectionate; it is said too that very intellectual men have often a liking for the same animal. In both these cases the attachment seems to be due more to certain other qualities of the cat than to any strength of sentiment on his part. Of all animals that we can have in a room with us, the cat is the least disturbing. Dogs bring so much dirt into houses that many ladies have a positive horror of them; squirrels leap about in a manner highly dangerous to the ornaments of a drawing-room; whilst monkeys are so incorrigibly mischievous that it is impossible to tolerate them, notwithstanding the nearness of the relationship. But you may have a cat in the room with you without anxiety about anything except eatables. He will rob a dish if he can get at it, but he will not, except by the rarest of accidents, displace a sheet of paper or upset an inkstand. The presence of a cat is positively soothing to a student, as the presence of a quiet nurse is soothing to the irritability of an invalid. It is agreeable to feel that you are not absolutely alone, and it seems to you, as you work, as if the cat took care that all her movements should be noiseless, purely out of consideration for your comfort. Then, if you have time to caress her,

you know that there will be purring responses, and why inquire too closely into the sincerity of her gratitude? There have been instances of people who surrounded themselves with cats; old maids have this fancy sometimes, which is intelligible, because old maids delight in having objects on which to lavish their inexhaustible kindness, and their love of neatness and comfort is in harmony with the neat habits of these comfort-appreciating creatures. A dog on velvet is evidently out of place, he would be as happy on clean straw, but a cat on velvet does not awaken any sense of the incongruous. It is more difficult to understand how men of business ever take to cats. A well-known French politician, who certainly betrayed nothing feminine in his speeches, was so fond of cats that it was impossible to dine peaceably at his house on account of four licensed feline marauders which promenaded upon the dinner-table, helping themselves to everything, and jumping about the shoulders of the guests. It may be observed that in Paris cats frequently appear upon the table in another shape. I once stayed in a house not very far from the great triumphal arch; and from my window, at certain hours of the day, might be observed a purveyor of dead cats who supplied a small cheap restaurant in a back street. I never went to eat at the restaurant, but ascertained that it had a certain reputation for a dish supposed to be made of rabbits. During the great siege, many Parisians who may frequently have eaten cat without knowing it (as you also may perchance have done, respected reader) came to eat cat with clear knowledge of the true nature of the feast, and they all seem to agree that it was very good. Our prejudices about the flesh we use for food are often inconsistent, the most reasonable

one seems to be a preference for vegetable feeders, yet we eat lobsters and pike. The truth is that nobody who eats even duck can consistently have a horror of cat's flesh on the ground of the animal's habits. And although the cat is a carnivorous animal, it has a passionate fondness for certain vegetable substances, delighting in the odour of valerian, and in the taste of asparagus, the former to ecstasy, the latter to downright gluttony.

Since artists cannot conveniently have lions and tigers in their studios, they sometimes like to have cats merely that they may watch the ineffable grace of their motions. Stealthy and treacherous as they are, they have yet a quite peculiar finish of style in action, far surpassing, in certain qualities of manner, the most perfectly-trained action of horses, or even the grace of the roe-deer or the gazelle. All other animals are stiff in comparison with the felines, all other animals have distinctly bodies supported by legs, reminding one of the primitive toy-maker's conception of a quadruped, a cylinder on four sticks, with a neck and head at one end and a tail at the other. But the cat no more recalls this rude anatomy than does a serpent. From the tips of his whiskers to the extremities of tail and claws he is so much living india-rubber. One never thinks of muscles and bones whilst looking at him (*has* he any muscles and bones?), but only of the reserved electric life that lies waiting under the softness of the fur. What bursts of energy the creature is capable of! I once shut up a half-wild cat in a room and he flew about like a frightened bird, or like leaves caught in a whirlwind. He dashed against the windowpanes like a sudden hail, ran up the walls like arrested water, and flung himself everywhere with such

rapidity that he filled as much space, and filled it almost as dangerously, as twenty flashing swords. And yet this incredibly wild energy is in the creature's quiet habits subdued with an exquisite moderation. The cat always uses precisely the necessary force, other animals roughly employ what strength they happen to possess without reference to the small occasion. One day I watched a young cat playing with a daffodil. She sat on her hind-legs and patted the flower with her paws, first with one paw and then with the other, making the light yellow bell sway from side to side, yet not injuring a petal or a stamen. She took a delight, evidently, in the very delicacy of the exercise, whereas a dog or a horse has no enjoyment of delicacy in his own movements, but acts strongly when he is strong, without calculating whether the force used may not be in great part superfluous. This proportioning of the force to the need is well known to be one of the evidences of refined culture, both in manners and in the fine arts. If animals could speak as fabulists have feigned, the dog would be a blunt, blundering outspoken, honest fellow, but the cat would have the rare talent of never saying a word too much. A hint of the same character is conveyed by the sheathing of the claws, and also by the contractability of the pupil of the eye. The hostile claws are invisible, and are not shown when they are not wanted, yet are ever sharp and ready. The eye has a narrow pupil in broad daylight, receiving no more sunshine than is agreeable, but it will gradually expand as twilight falls, and clear vision needs a larger and larger surface. Some of these cat-qualities are very desirable in criticism. The claws of a critic ought to be very sharp, but not perpetually prominent, and his eye ought to see

far into rather obscure subjects without being dazzled by plain daylight.

It is odd that, notwithstanding the extreme beauty of cats, their elegance of motion, the variety and intensity of their colour, they should be so little painted by considerable artists. Almost all the pictures of cats which I remember were done by inferior men, often by artists of a very low grade indeed. The reason for this is probably, that although the cat is a refined and very voluptuous animal, it is so wanting in the nobler qualities as to fail in winning the serious sympathies of noble and generous-hearted men. M. Manet once very appropriately introduced a black cat on the bed of a Parisian lorette, and this cat became quite famous for a week or two in all the Parisian newspapers, being also cleverly copied by the caricaturists. No other painted cat ever attracted so much attention, indeed "Le chat de M. Manet" amused Paris as Athens amused itself with the dog of Alcibiades.

M. Manet's cat had an awful look, and depths of meaning were discoverable in its eyes of yellow flame set in the blackness of the night. There has always been a feeling that a black cat was not altogether "canny." Many of us, if we were quite sincere, would confess to a superstition about black cats. They seem to know too much, and is it not written that their ancesters were the companions and accomplices of witches in the times of old? Who can tell what baleful secrets may not have been transmitted through their generations? There can be no doubt that cats know a great deal more than they choose to tell us, though occasionally they may let a secret out in some unguarded moment. Shelley the poet, who had an intense sense of the

supernatural, narrates the following history, as he heard it from Mr. G. Lewis:

A gentleman on a visit to a friend who lived on the skirts of an extensive forest on the east of Germany lost his way. He wandered for some hours among the trees, when he saw a light at a distance. On approaching it, he was surprised to observe that it proceeded from the interior of a ruined monastery. Before he knocked, he thought it prudent to look through the window. He saw a multitude of cats assembled round a small grave, four of whom were letting down a coffin with a crown upon it. The gentleman, startled at this unusual sight, and imagining that he had arrived among the retreats of fiends or witches, mounted his horse and rode away with the utmost precipitation. He arrived at his friend's house at a late hour, who had sat up for him. On his arrival, his friend questioned as to the cause of the traces of trouble visible on his face. He began to recount his adventure, after much difficulty, knowing that it was scarcely possible that his friend should give faith to his relation. No sooner had he mentioned the coffin with a crown upon it, than his friend's cat, who seemed to have been lying asleep before the fire, leaped up, saying, "Then I am the King of the Cats!" and scrambled up the chimney and was seen no more.

Now, is not that a remarkable story, proving, at the same time, the attention cats pay to human conversation even when they outwardly seem perfectly indifferent to it, and the monarchical character of their political organisation, which without this incident might have remained for ever unknown to us? This happened, we are told, in eastern Germany; but in our own island, less than a hundred years ago, there remained at least one cat fit to be the ministrant of a sorceress. When Sir Walter Scott visited the Black Dwarf, "Bowed Davie Ritchie," the Dwarf said, "Man, *hae ye ony poo'r?*" meaning power of a supernatural kind, and he added solemnly, pointing to a large black cat whose fiery eyes

shone in a dark corner of the cottage, "He *has poo'r!*" In Scott's place any imaginative person would have more than half believed Davie, as indeed did his illustrious visitor. The ancient Egyptians, who knew as much about magic as the wisest of the moderns, certainly believed that the cat had *poo'r*, or they would not have mummified him with such painstaking conscientiousness. It may easily be imagined that in times when science did not exist, a creature whose fur emitted lightnings when anybody rubbed it in the dark, must have inspired great awe, and there is really an air of mystery about cats which considerably exercises the imagination. This impression would be intensified in the case of people born with a physical antipathy to cats, and there are such persons. A Captain Logan, of Knockshinnock in Ayrshire, is mentioned in one of the early numbers of *Chambers' Journal* as having this antipathy in the strongest form. He simply could not endure the sight of cat or kitten, and though a tall, strong man, would do anything to escape from the objects of his instinctive and uncontrollable horror, climbing upon chairs if a cat entered the room, and not daring to come down till the creature was removed from his presence. These mysterious repugnances are outside the domain of reason. Many people, not without courage, are seized with involuntary shudderings when they see a snake or a toad; others could not bring themselves to touch a rat, though the rat is one of the cleanliest of animals—not certainly, as to his food, but his person. It may be presumed that one Mrs. Griggs, who lived, I believe, in Edinburgh, did not share Captain Logan's antipathy, for she kept in her house no less than eighty-six living cats, and had, besides, twenty-eight dead ones in glass cases,

immortalised by the art of the taxidermist. If it is true, and it certainly is so in a great measure, that those who love most know most, then Mrs. Griggs would have been a much more competent person to write on cats than the colder-minded author of these chapters. It is wonderful to think how much that good lady must have known of the *lovableness* of cats, of those recondite qualities which may endear them to the human heart!

What a difference in knowledge and feeling concerning cats between Mrs. Griggs and a gamekeeper! The gamekeeper knows a good deal about them too, but it is not exactly affection which has given keenness to *his* observation. He does not see a "dear sweet pet" in every cat that crosses his woodland paths, but the most destructive of poachers, the worst of "vermin." And there can be no doubt that from his point of view the gamekeeper is quite right, even as good Mrs. Griggs may have been from hers. If cats killed game from hunger only, there would be a limit to their depredations, but unfortunately they have the instinct of sport, which sportsmen consider a very admirable quality in themselves, but regard with the strongest disapprobation in other animals. Mr. Frank Buckland says, that when once a cat has acquired the passion for hunting it becomes so strong that it is impossible to break him of it. He knew a cat which had been condemned to death, but the owner begged its life on condition that it should be shut up every night and well fed. The very first night of its incarceration it escaped up the chimney, and was found the next morning, black with soot, in one of the gamekeeper's traps. The keeper easily determines what kind of animal has been committing depredations in his absence. "Every animal has his own way of killing

and eating his prey. The cat always turns the skin *inside out*, leaving the same reversed like a glove. The weasel and stoat will eat the brain and nibble about the head, and suck the blood. The fox will always leave the legs and hinder parts of a hare or a rabbit; the dog tears his prey to pieces, and eats it 'anyhow—all over the place'; the crows and magpies always peck at the eyes before they touch any part of the body."

"Again," continues Mr. Frank Buckland, "let the believer in the innocence of Mrs. Puss listen to the crow of the startled pheasant; he will hear him 'tree,' as the keeper calls it, and from his safe perch up in a branch again crow as if to summon his protector to his aid. No second summons does the keeper want; he at once runs to the spot, and there, stealing with erect ears, glaring eyes, and limbs collected together, and at a high state of tension, ready for the fatal spring, he sees—what?—the cat, of course, caught in the very attitude of premeditated poaching."

This love of sport might perhaps be turned to account if cats were trained as larger felines are trained for the princes of India. A fisherman of Portsmouth, called "Robinson Crusoe," made famous by Mr. Buckland, had a cat called "Puddles," which overcame the horror of water characteristic of his race, and employed his piscatorial talents in the service of his master:

He was the wonderfullest water-cat as ever came out of Portsmouth Harbour was Puddles, and he used to go out a-fishing with me every night. On cold nights he would sit in my lap while I was a-fishing and poke his head out every now and then, or else I would wrap him up in a sail, and make him lay quiet. He'd lay down on me when I was asleep, and if anybody come he'd swear a good one, and have the face off on 'em if they went to

touch me; and he'd never touch a fish, not even a little teeny pout, if you did not give it him. I was obligated to take him out a-fishing, for else he would stand and youl and marr till I went back and catched him by the pol and shied him into the boat, and then he was quite happy. When it was fine he used to stick up at the bows of the boat and sit a-watching the dogs (*i. e.*, dog-fish). The dogs used to come alongside by thousands at a time, and when they were thick all about he would dive in and fetch them out, jammed in his mouth as fast as may be, just as if they was a parcel of rats, and he did not tremble with the cold half as much as a Newfoundland dog; he was used to it. He looked terrible wild about the head when he came up out of the water with the dog-fish. I larnt him the water myself. One day, when he was a kitten, I took him down to the sea to wash and brush the fleas out of him, and in a week he could swim after a feather or a cork.

Of the cat in a state of nature few of us have seen very much. The wild cat has become rare in the British islands, but the specimens shot occasionally by game-keepers are very superior in size and strength to the familiar occupant of the hearth-rug. I remember that when I lived at Loch Awe, my next neighbour, a keeper on the Cladich estate, shot one that quite astonished me—a formidable beast indeed, to which the largest domestic cat was as an ordinary human being to Chang the giant—indeed this comparison is insufficient. Wild cats are not usually dangerous to man, for they prudently avoid him, but if such a creature as that killed on Lochaweside were to show fight, an unarmed man would find the situation very perilous. I would much rather have to fight a wolf. There is a tradition at the village of Barnborough, in Yorkshire, that a man and a wild cat fought together in a wood near there, and that the combat went on till they got to the church-porch, when both died from their wounds. It is the marvellous agility of the cat which makes him such a terrible enemy;

to say that he "flies" at you is scarcely a figure of speech. However, the wild cat, when he knows that he is observed, generally seeks refuge, as King Charles did at Boscobel, in the leafy shelter of some shadowy tree, and there the deadly leaden hail too surely follows him, and brings him to earth again.

Cats have the advantage of being very highly connected, since the king of beasts is their blood-relation, and it is certain that a good deal of the interest we take in them is due to this august relationship. What the merlin or the sparrow-hawk is to the golden eagle, the cat is to the great felines of the tropics. The difference between a domestic cat and a tiger is scarcely wider than that which separates a miniature pet dog from a blood-hound. It is becoming to the dignity of an African prince, like Theodore of Abyssinia, to have lions for his household pets. The true grandeur and majesty of a brave man are rarely seen in such visible supremacy as when he sits surrounded by these terrible creatures, he in his fearlessness, they in their awe; he in his defenceless weakness, they with that mighty strength which they dare not use against him. One of my friends, distinguished alike in literature and science, but not at all the sort of person, apparently, to command respect from brutes who cannot estimate intellectual greatness, had one day an interesting conversation with a lion-tamer, which ended in a still more interesting experiment. The lion-tamer affirmed that there was no secret in his profession, that *real* courage alone was necessary, and that any one who had the genuine gift of courage could safely enter the cage along with him. "For example, you yourself, sir," added the lion-tamer, "if you have the sort of courage I mean, may go into the cage with

me whenever you like." On this my friend, who has a fine intellectual coolness and unbounded scientific curiosity, willingly accepted the offer, and paid a visit to their majesties the lions in the privacy of their own apartment. They received him with the politeness due to a brave man, and after an agreeable interview of several minutes he backed out of the royal presence with the gratified feelings of a gentleman who has just been presented at court.

—Philip Gilbert Hamerton.

XIV

ON VAGABONDS

CALL it oddity, eccentricity, humour, or what you please, it is evident that the special flavour of mind or manner which, independently of fortune, station, or profession, sets a man apart and makes him distinguishable from his fellows, and which gives the charm of picturesqueness to society, is fast disappearing from amongst us. A man may count the odd people of his acquaintance on his fingers; and it is observable that these odd people are generally well stricken in years. They belong more to the past generation than to the present. Our young men are terribly alike. For these many years back, the young gentlemen I have had the fortune to encounter are clever, knowing, selfish, disagreeable; the young ladies are of one pattern, like minted sovereigns of the same reign—excellent gold, I have no doubt, but each bearing the same awfully proper image and superscription. There are no blanks in the matrimonial lottery nowadays, but the prizes are all of a value, and there is but one kind of article given for the ticket. Courtship is an absurdity and a sheer waste of time. If a man could but close his eyes in a ballroom, dash into a bevy of muslin beauties, carry off the fair one that accident gives to his arms, his raid would be as reasonable and as likely to produce happiness as the more ordinary methods of procuring a spouse. If a man has to choose one guinea out of a bag containing

one hundred and fifty, what can he do? What wonderful wisdom can he display in his choice? There is no appreciable difference of value in the golden pieces. The latest coined are a little fresher, that's all. An act of uniformity, with heavy penalties for recusants, seems to have been passed upon the English race. That we can quite well account for this state of things, does not make the matter better, does not make it the less our duty to fight against it. We are apt to be told that men are too busy and women too accomplished for humour of speech or originality of character or manner. In the truth of this lies the pity of it. If, with the exceptions of hedges that divide fields, and streams that run as marches between farms, every inch of soil were drained, ploughed, manured, and under that improved cultivation rushing up into astonishing wheaten and oaten crops, enriching tenant and proprietor, the aspect of the country would be decidedly uninteresting, and would present scant attraction to the man riding or walking through it. In such a world the tourists would be few. Personally, I should detest a world all red and ruled with the ploughshare in spring, all covered with harvest in autumn. I wish a little variety. I desiderate moors and barren places: the copse where you can flush the woodcock; the warren where, when you approach, you can see the twinkle of innumerable rabbit tails; and, to tell the truth, would not feel sorry although Reynard himself had a hole beneath the wooded bank, even if the demands of his rising family cost Farmer Yellowleas a fat capon or two in the season. The fresh, rough, heathery parts of human nature, where the air is freshest, and where the linnets sing, is getting encroached upon by cultivated fields. Every one is making himself and herself useful. Every

one is producing something. Everybody is clever. Everybody is a philanthropist. I don't like it. I love a little eccentricity. I respect honest prejudices. I admire foolish enthusiasm in a young head better than a wise scepticism. It is high time, it seems to me, that a moral game-law were passed for the preservation of the wild and vagrant feelings of human nature.

I have advertised myself to speak of *vagabonds*, and I must explain what I mean by the term. We all know what was the doom of the first child born of man, and it is needless for me to say that I do not wish the spirit of Cain more widely diffused amongst my fellow-creatures. By vagabonds, I do not mean a tramp or a gypsy, or a thimble-rigger, or a brawler who is brought up with a black eye before a magistrate in the morning. The vagabond as I have him in my mind's eye, and whom I dearly love, comes out of quite a different mould. The man I speak of, seldom, it is true, attains to the dignity of a churchwarden; he is never found sitting at a reformed town council board; he has a horror of public platforms; he never by any chance heads a subscription list with a donation of fifty pounds. On the other hand, he is very far from being a "ne'er-do-weel," as the Scotch phrase it, or an imprudent person. He does not play at "Aunt Sally" on a public race-course; he does not wrench knockers from the doors of slumbering citizens; he has never seen the interior of a police-cell. It is quite true, he has a peculiar way of looking at many things. If, for instance, he is brought up with cousin Milly, and loves her dearly, and the childish affection grows up and strengthens in the woman's heart, and there is a fair chance for them fighting the world side by side, he marries her without too curiously considering

whether his income will permit him to give dinner-parties, and otherwise fashionably see his friends. Very imprudent, no doubt. But you cannot convince my vagabond. With the strangest logical twist, which seems natural to him, he conceives that he marries for his own sake, and not for the sake of his acquaintances, and that the possession of a loving heart and a conscience void of reproach is worth, at any time, an odd sovereign in his pocket. The vagabond is not a favourite with the respectable classes. He is particularly feared by mammas who have daughters to dispose of,—not that he is a bad son, or likely to prove a bad husband or a treacherous friend; but somehow gold does not stick to his fingers as it does to the fingers of some men. He is regardless of appearances. He chooses his friends neither for their fine houses nor their rare wines, but for their humours, their goodness of heart, their capacities of making a joke and of seeing one, and for their abilities, unknown often as the woodland violet, but not the less sweet for obscurity. As a consequence, his acquaintance is miscellaneous, and he is often seen at other places than rich men's feasts. I do believe he is a gainer by reason of his vagrant ways. He comes in contact with the queer corners and the out-of-the-way places of human life. He knows more of our common nature, just as the man who walks through a country, and who strikes off the main road now and then to visit a ruin, or a legendary cairn of stones, who drops into village inns, and talks with the people he meets on the road, becomes better acquainted with it than the man who rolls haughtily along the turnpike in a carriage and four. We lose a great deal by foolish hauteur. No man is worth much who has not a touch of the vagabond in him. Could I

have visited London thirty years ago, I would rather have spent an hour with Charles Lamb than with any other of its residents. He was a fine specimen of the vagabond, as I conceive him. His mind was as full of queer nooks and tortuous passages as any mansion house of Elizabeth's day or earlier, where the rooms are cosey, albeit a little low in the roof; where dusty stained lights are falling on old oaken panellings; where every bit of furniture has a reverent flavour of ancientness; where portraits of noble men and women, all dead long ago, are hanging on the walls; and where a black letter Chaucer with silver clasps is lying open on a seat in the window. There was nothing modern about him. The garden of his mind did not flaunt in gay parterres; it resembled those that Cowley and Evelyn delighted in, with clipped trees, and shaven lawns, and stone satyrs, and dark, shadowing yews, and a sun-dial, with a Latin motto sculptured on it, standing at the farther end. Lamb was the slave of quip and whimsey; he stuttered out puns to the detriment of all serious and improving conversation, and twice or so in the year he was overtaker in liquor. Well, in spite of these things, perhaps on account of these things, I love his memory. For love and charity ripened in that nature as peaches ripen on the wall that fronts the sun. Although he did not blow his trumpet in the corners of the streets, he was tried as few men are, and fell not. He jested, that he might not weep. He wore a martyr's heart beneath his suit of motley. And only years after his death, when to admiration or censure he was alike insensible, did the world know his story and that of his sister Mary.

Ah, me! what a world this was to live in two or three centuries ago, when it was getting itself discovered—

when the sunset gave up America, when a steel hand had the spoiling of Mexico and Peru! Then were the "Arabian Nights" commonplace, enchantments a matter of course, and romance the most ordinary thing in the world. Then man was courting Nature; now he has married her. Every mystery is dissipated. The planet is familiar as the trodden pathway running between towns. We no longer gaze wistfully to the west, dreaming of the Fortunate Isles. We seek our wonders now on the ebbed sea-shore; we discover our new worlds with the microscope. Yet, for all that time has brought and taken away, I am glad to know that the vagabond sleeps in our blood, and awakes now and then. Overlay human nature as you please, here and there some bit of rock, or mound of aboriginal soil, will crop out with the wild-flowers growing upon it, sweetening the air. When the boy throws his Delectus or his Euclid aside, and takes passionately to the reading of "Robinson Crusoe" or Bruce's "African Travels," do not shake your head despondingly over him and prophesy evil issues. Let the wild hawk try its wings. It will be hooded, and will sit quietly enough on the falconer's perch ere long. Let the wild horse career over its boundless pampas; the jerk of the lasso will bring it down soon enough. Soon enough will the snaffle in the mouth and the spur of the tamer subdue the high spirit to the bridle, or the carriage-trace. Perhaps not; and, if so, the better for all parties. Once more there will be a new man and new deeds in the world. For Genius is a vagabond, Art is a vagabond, Enterprise is a vagabond. Vagabonds have moulded the world into its present shape; they have made the houses in which we dwell, the roads on which we ride and drive, the very laws that govern us.

Respectable people swarm in the track of the vagabond as rooks in the track of the ploughshare. Respectable people do little in the world except storing wine-cellars and amassing fortunes for the benefit of spendthrift heirs. Respectable well-to-do Grecians shook their heads over Leonidas and his three hundred when they went down to Thermopylæ. Respectable Spanish churchmen with shaven crowns scouted the dream of Columbus. Respectable German folks attempted to dissuade Luther from appearing before Charles and the princes and electors of the Empire, and were scandalised when he declared that "Were there as many devils in Worms as there were tiles on the housetops, still would he on." Nature makes us vagabonds, the world makes us respectable.

In the fine sense in which I take the word, the English are the greatest vagabonds on the earth, and it is the healthiest trait in their national character. The first fine day in spring awakes the gypsy in the blood of the English workman, and incontinently he "babbles of green fields." On the English gentleman lapped in the most luxurious civilisation, and with the thousand powers and resources of wealth at his command, descends oftentimes a fierce unrest, a Bedouin-like horror of cities and the cry of the money-changer, and in a month the fiery dust rises in the track of his desert steed, or in the six months' polar midnight he hears the big wave clashing on the icy shore. The close presence of the sea feeds the Englishman's restlessness. She takes possession of his heart like some fair capricious mistress. Before the boy awakes to the beauty of cousin Mary, he is crazed by the fascinations of ocean. With her voices of ebb and flow she weaves her siren song round the

Englishman's coasts day and night. Nothing that dwells on land can keep from her embrace the boy who has gazed upon her dangerous beauty, and who has heard her singing songs of foreign shores at the foot of the summer crag. It is well that in the modern gentleman the fierce heart of the Berserker lives yet. The English are eminently a nation of vagabonds. The sun paints English faces with all the colours of his climes. The Englishman is ubiquitous. He shakes with fever and ague in the swampy valley of the Mississippi; he is drowned in the sand pillars as they waltz across the desert on the purple breath of the simoom; he stands on the icy scalp of Mont Blanc; his fly falls in the sullen Norwegian fiords; he invades the solitude of the Cape lion; he rides on his donkey through the uncausewayed Cairo streets. That wealthy people, under a despotism, should be travellers seems a natural thing enough. It is a way of escape from the rigours of their condition. But that England—where activity rages so keenly and engrosses every class; where the prizes of Parliament, literature, commerce, the bar, the church, are hungered and thirsted after; where the stress and intensity of life ages a man before his time; where so many of the noblest break down in harness hardly half-way to the goal—should, year after year, send off swarms of men to roam the world, and to seek out danger for the mere thrill and enjoyment of it, is significant of the indomitable pluck and spirit of the race. There is scant danger that the rust of sloth will eat into the virtue of English steel. The English do the hard work and the travelling of the world. The least revolutionary nation of Europe, the one with the greatest temptations to stay at home, with the greatest faculty for work, with perhaps

the sincerest regard for wealth, is also the most nomadic. How is this? It is because they are a nation of vagabonds; they have the "hungry heart" that one of their poets speaks about.

There is an amiability about the genuine vagabond which takes captive the heart. We do not love a man for his respectability, his prudence and foresight in business, his capacity of living within his income, or his balance at his banker's. We all admit that prudence is an admirable virtue, and occasionally lament, about Christmas, when bills fall in, that we do not inherit it in a greater degree. But we speak about it in quite a cool way. It does not touch us with enthusiasm. If a calculating-machine had a hand to wring, it would find few to wring it warmly. The things that really move liking in human beings are the gnarled nodosities of character, vagrant humours, freaks of generosity, some little unextinguishable spark of the aboriginal savage, some little sweet savour of the old Adam. It is quite wonderful how far simple generosity and kindliness of heart go in securing affection; and, when these exist, what a host of apologists spring up for faults and vices even. A country squire goes recklessly to the dogs; yet if he has a kind word for his tenant when he meets him, a frank greeting for the rustic beauty when she drops a courtesy to him on the highway, he lives for a whole generation in an odour of sanctity. If he had been a disdainful hook-nosed prime minister who had carried his country triumphantly through some frightful crisis of war, these people would, perhaps, never have been aware of the fact; and most certainly never would have tendered him a word of thanks, even if they had. When that important question, "Which is the greatest

foe to the public weal—the miser or the spendthrift?" is discussed at the artisans' debating club, the spendthrift has all the eloquence on his side—the miser all the votes. The miser's advocate is nowhere, and he pleads the cause of his client with only half his heart. In the theatre, Charles Surface is applauded, and Joseph Surface is hissed. The novel-reader's affection goes out to Tom Jones, his hatred to Blifil. Joseph Surface and Blifil are scoundrels, it is true; but deduct the scoundrelism, let Joseph be but a stale proverb-monger and Blifil a conceited prig, and the issue remains the same. Good humour and generosity carry the day with the popular heart all the world over. Tom Jones and Charles Surface are not vagabonds to my taste. They were shabby fellows both, and were treated a great deal too well. But there are other vagabonds whom I love, and whom I do well to love. With what affection do I follow little Ishmael and his broken-hearted mother out into the great and terrible wilderness, and see them faint beneath the ardours of the sunlight! And we feel it to be strict poetic justice and compensation that the lad so driven forth from human tents should become the father of wild Arabian men, to whom the air of cities is poison, who work without any tool, and on whose limbs no conqueror has ever yet been able to rivet shackle or chain. Then there are Abraham's grandchildren, Jacob and Esau—the former, I confess, no favourite of mine. His, up at least to his closing years, when parental affection and strong sorrow softened him, was a character not amiable. He lacked generosity and had too keen an eye on his own advancement. He did not inherit the noble strain of his ancestors. He was a prosperous man; yet in spite of his increase in flocks

and herds—in spite of his vision of the ladder, with the angels ascending and descending upon it—in spite of the success of his beloved son—in spite of the weeping and lamentations of the Egyptians at his death—in spite of his splendid funeral, winding from the city by the pyramid and the sphinx—in spite of all these things, I would rather have been the hunter Esau, with birthright filched away, bankrupt in the promise, rich only in fleet foot and keen spear, for he carried into the wilds with him an essentially noble nature—no brother with his mess of pottage could mulct him of that. And he had a fine revenge; for when Jacob, on his journey, heard that his brother was near with four hundred men, and made division of his flocks and herds, his man-servants and maid-servants, impetuous as a swollen hill-torrent, the fierce son of the desert, baked red with Syrian light, leaped down upon him, and fell on his neck and wept. And Esau said, "What meanest thou by all this drove which I met?" and Jacob said, "These are to find grace in the sight of my Lord;" then Esau said, "I have enough, my brother; keep that thou hast unto thyself." O mighty prince, didst thou remember thy mother's guile, the skins upon thy hands and neck, and the lie put upon the patriarch, as, blind with years, he sat up in his bed snuffing the savoury meat? An ugly memory, I should fancy!

Commend me to Shakespeare's vagabonds, the most delightful in the world! His sweetblooded and liberal nature blossomed into all fine generosities as naturally as an apple-bough into pink blossoms and odours. Listen to Gonsalvo talking to the shipwrecked Milan nobles camped for the night in Prospero's isle, full of sweet voices

with Ariel shooting through the enchanted air like a falling star:

> Had I the plantation of this isle, my lord,
> I' the commonwealth I would by contraries
> Execute all things; for no kind of traffic
> Would I admit; no name of magistrate;
> Letters should not be known; riches, poverty,
> And use of service none; contract, succession,
> Bourne, bound of land, tilth, title, vineyard none;
> No use of metal coin, or wine, or oil;
> No occupation—all men idle—all!
> And women too, but innocent and pure;
> No sovereignty;
> All things in common nature should produce,
> Without sweat or endurance; treason, felony,
> Sword, pike, knife, gun, or need of any engine
> Would I not have; but nature would bring forth
> Of its own kind all foison, all abundance,
> To feed my innocent people.
> I would with such perfection govern, sir,
> To excel the golden age.

What think you of a world after that pattern? "As You Like It" is a vagabond play, and, verily, if there waved in any wind that blows a forest peopled like Arden's, with an exiled king drawing the sweetest, humanest lessons from misfortune; a melancholy Jacques, stretched by the river bank, moralising on the bleeding deer; a fair Rosalind, chanting her saucy cuckoo-song; fools like Touchstone—not like those of our acquaintance, my friends; and the whole place, from centre to circumference, filled with mighty oak bolls, all carven with lovers' names—if such a forest waved in wind, I say, I would, be my worldly prospects what they might, pack up at once, and cast in my lot with that vagabond company. For there I should find more gallant courtesies,

finer sentiments, completer innocence and happiness, more wit and wisdom, than I am like to do here even though I search for them from shepherd's cot to king's palace. Just to think how those people lived! Carelessly as the blossoming trees, happily as the singing birds, time measured only by the patter of the acorn on the fruitful soil! A world without debtor or creditor, passing rich, yet with never a doit in its purse, with no sordid care, no regard for appearances; nothing to occupy the young but love-making, nothing to occupy the old but perusing the "sermons in stones" and the musical wisdom which dwells in "running brooks!" But Arden forest draws its sustenance from a poet's brain: the light that sleeps on its leafy pillows is "the light that never was on sea or shore." We but please and tantalise ourselves with beautiful dreams.

The children of the brain become to us actual existences, more actual, indeed, than the people who impinge upon us in the street, or who live next door. We are more intimate with Shakespeare's men and women than we are with our contemporaries, and they are, on the whole, better company. They are more beautiful in form and feature, and they express themselves in a way that the most gifted strive after in vain. What if Shakespeare's people could walk out of the play-books and settle down upon some spot of earth and conduct life there? There would be found humanity's whitest wheat, the world's unalloyed gold. The very winds could not visit the place roughly. No king's court could present you such an array. Where else could we find a philosopher like Hamlet? a friend like Antonio? a witty fellow like Mercutio? where else Imogen's piquant face? Portia's gravity and womanly sweetness?

Rosalind's true heart and silvery laughter? Cordelia's beauty of holiness? These would form the centre of the court, but the purlieus, how many-coloured! Malvolio would walk mincingly in the sunshine there: Autolycus would filch purses. Sir Andrew Aguecheek and Sir Toby Belch would be eternal boon companions. And as Falstaff sets out homeward from the tavern, the portly knight leading the revellers like a three-decker a line of frigates, they are encountered by Dogberry, who summons them to stand and answer to the watch as they are honest men. If Mr. Dickens's characters were gathered together, they would constitute a town populous enough to send a representative to Parliament. Let us enter. The style of architecture is unparalleled. There is an individuality about the buildings. In some obscure way they remind one of human faces. There are houses sly-looking, houses wicked-looking, houses pompous-looking. Heaven bless us! what a rakish pump! what a self-important town-hall! what a hard-hearted prison! The dead walls are covered with advertisements of Mr. Sleary's circus. Newman Noggs comes shambling along. Mr. and the Misses Pecksniff come sailing down the sunny side of the street. Miss Mercy's parasol is gay; papa's neck-cloth is white, and terribly starched. Dick Swiveller leans against a wall, his hands in his pockets, a primrose held between his teeth, contemplating the opera of Punch and Judy, which is being conducted under the management of Messrs. Codlin and Short. You turn a corner and you meet the coffin of little Paul Dombey borne along. Who would have thought of encountering a funeral in this place? In the afternoon you hear the rich tones of the organ from Miss La Creevy's first floor, for Tom Pinch has gone to live there

now; and as you know all the people as you know your own brothers and sisters, and consequently require no letters of introduction, you go up and talk with the dear old fellow about all his friends and your friends, and toward evening he takes your arm, and you walk out to see poor Nelly's grave—a place which he visits often, and which he dresses with flowers with his own hands. I know this is the idlest dreaming, but all of us have a sympathy with the creatures of the drama and the novel. Around the hardest cark and toil lies the imaginative world of the poets and romancists, and thither we sometimes escape to snatch a mouthful of serener air. There our best lost feelings have taken a human shape. We suppose that boyhood with its impulses and enthusiasms has subsided with the gray cynical man whom we have known these many years. Not a bit of it. It has escaped into the world of the poet, and walks a love-flushed Romeo in immortal youth. We suppose that the Mary of fifty years since, the rosebud of a girl that crazed our hearts, blossomed into the spouse of Jenkins, the stockbroker, and is now a grandmother. Not at all. She is Juliet leaning from the balcony, or Portia talking on the moonlight lawns at Belmont. There walk the shadows of our former selves. All that Time steals he takes thither; and to live in that world is to live in our lost youth, our lost generosities, illusions, and romances.

In middle-class life, and in the professions, when a standard or ideal is tacitly set up, to which every member is expected to conform on pain of having himself talked about, and wise heads shaken over him, the quick feelings of the vagabond are not frequently found. Yet, thanks to Nature, who sends her leafage and flowerage up through all kinds of *débris*, and who takes a blossomy

possession of ruined walls and desert places, it is never altogether dead! And of vagabonds, not the least delightful is he who retains poetry and boyish spirits beneath the crust of a profession. Mr. Carlyle commends "central fire," and very properly commends it most when "well covered in." In the case of a professional man, this "central fire" does not manifest itself in wasteful explosiveness, but in secret genial heat, visible in fruits of charity and pleasant humour. The physician who is a humourist commends himself doubly to a sick-bed. His patients are as much indebted for their cure to his smile, his voice, and a certain irresistible healthfulness that surrounds him, as they are to his skill and his prescriptions. The lawyer who is a humourist is a man of ten thousand. How easily the worldly-wise face, puckered over a stiff brief, relaxes into the lines of laughter. He sees many an evil side of human nature, he is familiar with slanders and injustice, all kinds of human bitterness and falsity; but neither his hand nor his heart becomes "imbued with that it works in"; and the little admixture of acid, inevitable from his circumstances and mode of life, but heightens the flavour of his humour. But of all humourists of the professional class, I prefer the clergyman, especially if he is well stricken in years, and has been anchored all his life in a country charge. He is none of your loud wits. There is a lady-like delicacy in his mind, a constant sense of his holy office, which warn him off dangerous subjects. This reserve, however, does but improve the quality of his mirth. What his humour loses in boldness, it gains in depth and slyness. And as the good man has seldom the opportunity of making a joke, or of procuring an auditor who can understand one, the dewy glitter of his

eyes, as you sit opposite him, and his heartfelt enjoyment of the matter in hand, are worth going a considerable way to witness. It is not, however, in the professions that the vagabond is commonly found. Over these that awful and ubiquitous female, Mrs. Grundy—at once Fate, Nemesis, and Fury—presides. The glare of her eye is professional danger, the pointing of her finger is professional death. When she utters a man's name, he is lost. The true vagabond is to be met with in other walks of life—among actors, poets, painters. These may grow in any way their nature directs. They are not required to conform to any traditional pattern. With regard to the respectabilities and the "minor morals," the world permits them to be libertines. Besides, it is a temperament peculiarly sensitive, or generous, or enjoying, which at the beginning impels these to their special pursuits; and that temperament, like everything else in the world, strengthens with use, and grows with what it feeds on. We look upon an actor, sitting amongst ordinary men and women, with a certain curiosity—we regard him as a creature from another planet, almost. His life and his world are quite different from ours. The orchestra, the footlights, and the green baize curtain, divide us. He is a monarch half his time—his entrance and his exit proclaimed by flourish of trumpet. He speaks in blank verse, is wont to take his seat at gilded banquets, to drink nothing out of a pasteboard goblet. The actor's world has a history amusing to read, and lines of noble and splendid traditions, stretching back to charming Nelly's time, and earlier. The actor has strange experiences. He sees the other side of the moon. We roar at Grimaldi's funny face: he sees the lines of pain in it. We hear Romeo wish to be "a glove upon

that hand that he might touch that cheek": three minutes afterward he beholds Romeo refresh himself with a pot of porter. We see the Moor, who "loved not wisely, but too well," smother Desdemona with the nuptial bolster: he sees them sit down to a hot supper. We always think of the actor as on the stage: he always thinks of us as in the boxes. In justice to the poets of the present day, it may be noticed that they have improved on their brethren in Johnson's time, who were, according to Lord Macaulay, hunted by bailiffs and familiar with sponging-houses, and who, when hospitably entertained, were wont to disturb the household of the entertainer by roaring for hot punch at four o'clock in the morning. Since that period the poets have improved in the decencies of life: they wear broadcloth, and settle their tailors' accounts even as other men. At this present moment Her Majesty's poets are perhaps the most respectable of Her Majesty's subjects. They are all teetotallers; if they sin, it is in rhyme, and then only to point a moral. In past days the poet flew from flower to flower, gathering his honey; but he bore a sting, too, as the rude hand that touched him could testify. He freely gathers his honey as of old, but the satiric sting has been taken away. He lives at peace with all men—his brethren excepted. About the true poet still there is something of the ancient spirit—the old "flash and outbreak of the fiery mind," the old enthusiasm and dash of humorous eccentricity. But he is fast disappearing from the catalogue of vagabonds—fast getting commonplace, I fear. Many people suspect him of dulness. Besides, such a crowd of well-meaning, amiable, most respectable men have broken down of late years the pales of Parnassus, and become squatters

on the sacred mount, that the claim of poets to be a peculiar people is getting disallowed. Never in this world's history were they so numerous; and although some people deny that they *are* poets, few are cantankerous enough or intrepid enough to assert that they are vagabonds. The painter is the most agreeable of vagabonds. His art is a pleasant one; it demands some little manual exertion, and it takes him at times into the open air. It is pleasant, too, in this, that lines and colours are so much more palpable than words, and the appeal of his work to his practised eye has some satisfaction in it. He knows what he is about. He does not altogether lose his critical sense, as the poet does, when familiarity stales his subject, and takes the splendour out of his images. Moreover, his work is more profitable than the poet's. I suppose there are just as few great painters at the present day as there are great poets; yet the yearly receipts of the artists of England far exceed the receipts of the singers. A picture can usually be painted in less time than a poem can be written. A second-rate picture has a certain market value—its frame is at least something. A second-rate poem is utterly worthless, and no one will buy it on account of its binding. A picture is your own exclusive property: it is a costly article of furniture. You hang it on your walls, to be admired by all the world. Pictures represent wealth: the possession of them is a luxury. The portrait-painter is of all men the most beloved. You sit to him willingly, and put on your best looks. You are inclined to be pleased with his work, on account of the strong prepossession you entertain for his subject. To sit for one's portrait is like being present at one's own creation. It is an admirable excuse for egotism. You

would not discourse on the falcon-like curve which distinguishes your nose, or the sweet serenity of your reposing lips, or the mildness of the eye that spreads a light over your countenance, in the presence of a fellow-creature for the whole world; yet you do not hesitate to express the most favourable opinion of the features starting out on you from the wet canvas. The interest the painter takes in his task flatters you. And when the sittings are over, and you behold yourself hanging on your own wall, looking as if you could direct kingdoms or lead armies, you feel grateful to the artist. He ministers to your self-love, and you pay him his hire without wincing. Your heart warms toward him as it would toward a poet who addresses you in an ode of panegyric, the kindling terms of which—a little astonishing to your friends—you believe in your heart of hearts to be the simple truth, and, in the matter of expression, not over-coloured in the very least. The portrait-painter has a shrewd eye for character, and is usually the best anecdote-monger in the world. His craft brings him into contact with many faces, and he learns to compare them curiously, and to extract their meanings. He can interpret wrinkles; he can look through the eyes into the man; he can read a whole foregone history in the lines about the mouth. Besides, from the good understanding which usually exists between the artist and his sitter, the latter is inclined somewhat to unbosom himself; little things leak out in conversation, not much in themselves, but pregnant enough to the painter's sense, who pieces them together, and constitutes a tolerably definite image. The man who paints your face knows you better than your intimate friends do, and has a clearer knowledge of your amiable weaknesses, and of the secret motives

which influence your conduct, than you oftentimes have yourself. A good portrait is a kind of biography, and neither painter nor biographer can carry out his task satisfactorily unless he be admitted behind the scenes. I think that the landscape painter, who has acquired sufficient mastery in his art to satisfy his own critical sense, and who is appreciated enough to find purchasers, and thereby to keep the wolf from the door, must be of all mankind the happiest. Other men live in cities, bound down to some settled task and order of life; but he is a nomad, and wherever he goes "Beauty pitches her tents before him." He is smitten by a passionate love for Nature, and is privileged to follow her into her solitary haunts and recesses. Nature is his mistress, and he is continually making declarations of his love. When one thinks of ordinary occupations, how one envies him, flecking his oak-tree boll with sunlight, tinging with rose the cloud of the morning in which the lark is hid, making the sea's swift fringe of foaming lace outspread itself on the level sands, in which the pebbles gleam forever wet. The landscape painter's memory is inhabited by the fairest visions—dawn burning on the splintered peaks that the eagles know, while the valleys beneath are yet filled with uncertain light; the bright blue morn stretching over miles of moor and mountain; the slow up-gathering of the bellied thunder-cloud; summer lakes, and cattle knee-deep in them; rustic bridges forever crossed by old women in scarlet cloaks; old-fashioned waggons resting on the scrubby common, the waggoner lazy and wayworn, the dog couched on the ground, its tongue hanging out in the heat; boats drawn up on the shore at sunset; the fisher's children looking seawards, the red light full on their

dresses and faces; farther back, a clump of cottages, with bait-baskets about the dog and the smoke of the evening meal coiling up into the coloured air. These things are forever with him. Beauty, which is a luxury to other men, is his daily food. Happy vagabond, who lives the whole summer through in the light of his mistress's face, and who does nothing the whole winter except recall the splendour of her smiles!

The vagabond, as I have explained and sketched him, is not a man to tremble at, or avoid as if he wore contagion in his touch. He is upright, generous, innocent, is conscientious in the performance of his duties; and if a little eccentric and fond of the open air, he is full of good nature and mirthful charity. He may not make money so rapidly as you do, but I cannot help thinking that he enjoys life a great deal more. The quick feeling of life, the exuberance of animal spirits which break out in the traveller, the sportsman, the poet, the painter, should be more generally diffused. We should be all the better and all the happier for it. Life ought to be freer, heartier, more enjoyable than it is at present. If the professional fetter must be worn, let it be worn as lightly as possible. It should never be permitted to canker the limbs. We are a free people—we have an unshackled press—we have an open platform, and can say our say upon it, no king or despot making us afraid. We send representatives to Parliament; the franchise is always going to be extended. All this is very fine, and we do well to glory in our privileges as Britons. But, although we enjoy greater political freedom than any other people, we are the victims of a petty social tyranny. We are our own despots—we tremble at a neighbour's whisper. A man may say what he likes on a public

platform—he may publish whatever opinion he chooses —but he dare not wear a peculiar fashion of hat on the street. Eccentricity is an outlaw. Public opinion blows like the east wind, blighting bud and blossom on the human bough. As a consequence of all this, society is losing picturesqueness and variety—we are all growing up after one pattern. In other matters than architecture past time may be represented by the wonderful ridge of the Old Town of Edinburgh, where everything is individual and characteristic; the present time by the streets and squares of the New Town, where everything is gray, cold, and respectable; where every house is the other's *alter ego*. It is true that life is healthier in the formal square than in the piled-up picturesqueness of the Canongate—quite true that sanitary conditions are better observed—that pure water flows through every tenement like blood through a human body, that daylight has free access, and that the apartments are larger and higher in the roof. But every gain is purchased at the expense of some loss; and it is best to combine, if possible, the excellences of the old and the new. By all means retain the modern breadth of light, and range of space; by all means have water plentiful, and bed-chambers ventilated,—but at the same time have some little freak of fancy without—some ornament about the door, some device about the window—something to break the cold, gray, stony uniformity; or, to leave metaphor, which is always dangerous ground—for I really don't wish to advocate Ruskinism and the Gothic—it would be better to have, along with our modern enlightenment, our higher tastes and purer habits, a greater individuality of thought and manner; better, while retaining all that we have gained, that

harmless eccentricity should be respected—that every man should be allowed to grow in his own way, so long as he does not infringe on the rights of his neighbour, or insolently thrust himself between him and the sun. A little more air and light should be let in upon life. I should think the world has stood long enough under the drill of Adjutant Fashion. It is hard work; the posture is wearisome, and Fashion is an awful martinet, and has a quick eye, and comes down mercilessly on the unfortunate wight who cannot square his toes to the approved pattern, or who appears upon parade with a darn in his coat, or with a shoulder-belt insufficiently pipe-clayed. It is killing work. Suppose we try "standing at ease" for a little!

—Alexander Smith.

XV

MARJORIE FLEMING

ONE November afternoon in 1810—the year in which "Waverley" was resumed and laid aside again, to be finished off, its last two volumes in three weeks, and made immortal in 1814, and when its author, by the death of Lord Melville, narrowly escaped getting a civil appointment in India—three men, evidently lawyers, might have been seen escaping like schoolboys from the Parliament House, and speeding arm-in-arm down Bank Street and the Mound, in the teeth of a surly blast of sleet.

The three friends sought the *bield* of the low wall old Edinburgh boys remember well, and sometimes miss now, as they struggle with the stout west wind.

The three were curiously unlike each other. One, "a little man of feeble make, who would be unhappy if his pony got beyond a foot pace," slight, with "small, elegant features, hectic cheek, and soft hazel eyes, the index of the quick, sensitive spirit within, as if he had the warm heart of a woman, her genuine enthusiasm, and some of her weaknesses." Another, as unlike a woman as a man can be; homely, almost common, in look and figure; his hat and his coat, and indeed his entire covering, worn to the quick, but all of the best material; what redeemed him from vulgarity and meanness were his eyes, deep set, heavily thatched, keen, hungry, shrewd, with a slumbering glow far in, as if they could be dangerous:

a man to care nothing for at first glance, but somehow to give a second and not-forgetting look at. The third was the biggest of the three, and though lame, nimble, and all rough and alive with power; had you met him anywhere else, you would say he was a Liddesdale storefarmer, come of gentle blood; "a stout, blunt carle," as he says of himself, with the swing and stride and the eye of a man of the hills—a large, sunny, out-of-door air all about him. On his broad and somewhat stooping shoulders, was set that head which, with Shakespeare's and Bonaparte's, is the best known in all the world.

He was in high spirits, keeping his companions and himself in roars of laughter, and every now and then seizing them, and stopping, that they might take their fill of the fun; there they stood shaking with laughter, "not an inch of their body free" from its grip. At George Street they parted, one to Rose Court, behind St. Andrew's Church, one to Albany Street, the other, our big and limping friend, to Castle Street.

We need hardly give their names. The first was William Erskine, afterwards Lord Kinnedder, chased out of the world by a calumny, killed by its foul breath—

> And at the touch of wrong, without a strife
> Slipped in a moment out of life.

There is nothing in literature more beautiful or more pathetic than Scott's love and sorrow for this friend of his youth.

The second was William Clerk—the "Darsie Latimer" of "Redgauntlet;" "a man," as Scott says, "of the most acute intellects and powerful apprehension," but of more powerful indolence, so as to leave the world with little more than the report of what he might have been—

a humorist as genuine, though not quite so savagely Swiftian as his brother, Lord Eldin, neither of whom had much of that commonest and best of all the humours, called good.

The third we all know. What has he not done for every one of us? Who else ever, except Shakespeare, so diverted mankind, entertained and entertains a world so liberally, so wholesomely? We are fain to say, not even Shakespeare, for his is something deeper than diversion, something higher than pleasure, and yet who would care to split this hair?

Had any one watched him closely before and after the parting, what a change he would see! The bright, broad laugh, the shrewd, jovial word, the man of the Parliament House and of the world; and next step, moody, the light of his eye withdrawn, as if seeing things that were invisible; his shut mouth, like a child's, so impressionable, so innocent, so sad; he was now all within, as before he was all without; hence his brooding look. As the snow blattered in his face, he muttered, "How it raves and drifts! On-ding o' snaw—ay, that's the word —on-ding—." He was now at his own door, "Castle Street, No. 39." He opened the door, and went straight to his den; that wondrous workshop, where, in one year, 1823, when he was fifty-two, he wrote "Peveril of the Peak," "Quentin Durward," and "St. Ronan's Well," besides much else. We once took the foremost of our novelists, the greatest, we would say, since Scott, into this room, and could not but mark the solemnising effect of sitting where the great magician sat so often and so long, and looking out upon that little shabby bit of sky and that back green, where faithful Camp lies.

He sat down in his large green morocco elbow-chair

drew himself close to his table, and glowered and gloomed at his writing apparatus, "a very handsome old box, richly carved, lined with crimson velvet, and containing ink-bottles, taper-stand, etc., in silver, the whole in such order, that it might have come from the silversmith's window half an hour before." He took out his paper, then starting up angrily, said, " 'Go spin, you jade, go spin.' No, d— it, it won't do—

> My spinnin' wheel is auld and stiff,
> The rock o't wunna stand, sir,
> To keep the temper-pin in tiff
> Employs ower aft my hand, sir.

I am off the fang. I can make nothing of 'Waverley' to-day; I'll awa' to Marjorie. Come wi' me, Maida, you thief." The great creature rose slowly, and the pair were off, Scott taking a *maud* (a plaid) with him. "White as a frosted plum-cake, by jingo!" said he, when he got to the street. Maida gambolled and whisked among the snow, and his master strode across to Young Street, and through it to 1 North Charlotte Street, to the house of his dear friend, Mrs. William Keith, of Corstorphine Hill, niece of Mrs. Keith, of Ravelston, of whom he said at her death, eight years after, "Much tradition, and that of the best, has died with this excellent old lady, one of the few persons whose spirits, *cleanliness* and freshness of mind and body made old age lovely and desirable."

Sir Walter was in that house almost every day, and had a key, so in he and the hound went, shaking themselves in the lobby. "Marjorie! Marjorie!" shouted her friend, "where are ye, my bonnie wee croodlin doo?" In a moment a bright, eager child of seven was in his arms, and he was kissing her all over. Out came Mrs. Keith. "Come yer ways in, Wattie." "No, not now.

I am going to take Marjorie wi' me, and you may come to your tea in Duncan Roy's sedan, and bring the bairn home in your lap." "Tak' Marjorie, and it *on-ding o snaw!*" said Mrs. Keith. He said to himself, "On-ding, —that's odd—that is the very word." "Hoot, awa! look here," and he displayed the corner of his plaid, made to hold lambs (the true shepherd's plaid, consisting of two breadths sewed together, and uncut at one end, making a poke or *cul-de-sac*). "Tak' yer lamb," said she, laughing at the contrivance, and so the Pet was first well happit up, and then put, laughing silently, into the plaid neuk, and the shepherd strode off with his lamb—Maida gambolling through the snow, and running races in her mirth.

Didn't he face "the angry airt," and make her bield his bosom, and into his own room with her, and lock the door, and out with the warm, rosy, little wifie, who took it all with great composure! There the two remained for three or more hours, making the house ring with their laughter; you can fancy the big man's and Maidie's laugh. Having made the fire cheery, he set her down in his ample chair, and standing sheepishly before her, began to say his lesson, which happened to he—"Ziccotty diccotty, dock, the mouse ran up the clock, the clock struck wan, down the mouse ran, ziccotty, diccotty, dock." This done repeatedly till she was pleased, she gave him his new lesson, gravely and slowly, timing it upon her small fingers—he saying it after her—

Wonery, twoery, tickery, seven;
Alibi, crackaby, ten, and eleven,
Pin, pan, musky, dan;
Tweedle-um, twoddle-um,
Twenty-wan; eerie, orie, ourie,
You, are, out.

He pretended to great difficulty and she rebuked him with most comical gravity, treating him as a child. He used to say that when he came to Alibi Crackaby he broke down, and Pin-Pan, Musky-Dan, Tweedle-um Twoddle-um made him roar with laughter. He said *Musky-Dan* especially was beyond endurance, bringing up an Irishman and his hat fresh from the Spice Islands and odoriferous Ind; she getting quite bitter in her displeasure at his ill-behaviour and stupidness.

Then he would read ballads to her in his own glorious way, the two getting wild with excitement over "Gil Morrice" or the "Baron of Smailholm"; and he would take her on his knee, and make her repeat Constance's speeches in "King John," till he swayed to and fro, sobbing his fill. Fancy the gifted little creature, like one possessed, repeating—

> For I am sick, and capable of fears,
> Oppressed with wrong, and therefore full of fears
> A widow, husbandless, subject to fears;
> A woman, naturally born to fears.
>
> If thou that bidst me be content, wert grim,
> Ugly and slanderous to thy mother's womb,
> Lame, foolish, crooked, swart, prodigious—.

Or, drawing herself up "to the height of her great argument,"

> I will instruct my sorrows to be proud,
> For grief is proud, and makes his owner stout,
> Here I and sorrow sit.

Scott used to say that he was amazed at her power over him, saying to Mrs. Keith, "She's the most extraordinary creature I ever met with, and her repeating of Shakespeare overpowers me as nothing else does."

Thanks to the unforgetting sister of this dear child, who has much of the sensibility and fun of her who has been in her small grave these fifty and more years, we have now before us the letters and journals of Pet Marjorie—before us lies and gleams her rich brown hair, bright and sunny as if yesterday's, with the words on the paper, "Cut out in her last illness," and two pictures of her by her beloved Isabella, whom she worshipped; there are the faded old scraps of paper, hoarded still, over which her warm breath and her warm little heart had poured themselves; there is the old water-mark, "Lingard, 1808." The two portraits are very like each other, but plainly done at different times; it is a chubby, healthy face, deepset, brooding eyes, as eager to tell what is going on within as to gather in all the glories from without; quick with the wonder and the pride of life; they are eyes that would not be soon satisfied with seeing; eyes that would devour their object, and yet childlike and fearless; and that is a mouth that will not be soon satisfied with love; it has a curious likeness to Scott's own, which has always appeared to us his sweetest, most mobile and speaking feature.

There she is, looking straight at us as she did at him, fearless and full of love, passionate, wild, wilful, fancy's child. One cannot look at it without thinking of Wordsworth's lines on poor Hartley Coleridge:—

> O blessed vision, happy child!
> Thou art so exquisitely wild,
> I thought of thee with many fears,
> Of what might be thy lot in future years.
> I thought of times when Pain might be thy guest,
> Lord of thy house and hospitality;
> And Grief, uneasy lover! ne'er at rest,
> But when she sat within the touch of thee.

Oh, too industrious folly!
Oh, vain and causeless melancholy!
Nature will either end thee quite,
Or, lengthening out thy season of delight
Preserve for thee by individual right,
A young lamb's heart among the full-grown flock.

And we can imagine Scott, when holding his warm, plump little playfellow in his arms, repeating that stately friend's lines:—

Loving she is, and tractable, though wild,
And Innocence hath privilege in her,
To dignify arch looks and laughing eyes,
And feats of cunning; and the pretty round
Of trespasses, affected to provoke
Mock chastisement and partnership in play.
And, as a fagot sparkles on the hearth,
Not less if unattended and alone,
Than when both young and old sit gathered round,
And take delight in its activity,
Even so this happy creature of herself
Is all-sufficient; solitude to her
Is blithe society; she fills the air
With gladness and involuntary songs.

But we will let her disclose herself. We need hardly say that all this is true, and that these letters are as really Marjorie's as was this light brown hair; indeed, you could as easily fabricate the one as the other.

There was an old servant, Jeanie Robertson, who was forty years in her grandfather's family. Marjorie Fleming, or, as she is called in the letters, and by Sir Walter, Maidie, was the last child she kept. Jeanie's wages never exceeded £3 a year, and, when she left service, she had saved £40. She was devotedly attached to Maidie, rather despising and ill-using her sister Isabella—a

beautiful and gentle child. This partiality made Maidie apt at times to domineer over Isabella. "I mention this" (writes her surviving sister) "for the purpose of telling you an instance of Maidie's generous justice. When only five years old, when walking in Raith grounds, the two children had run on before, and old Jeanie remembered they might come too near a dangerous mill-lade. She called to them to turn back. Maidie heeded her not, rushed all the faster on, and fell, and would have been lost, had her sister not pulled her back, saving her life, but tearing her clothes. Jeanie flew on Isabella to 'give it her' for spoiling her favourite's dress; Maidie rushed in between, crying out, 'Pay (whip) Maidie as much as you like, and I 'll not say one word; but touch Isy, and I'll roar like a bull!' Years after Maidie was resting in her grave, my mother used to take me to the place, and told the story always in the exact same words." This Jeanie must have been a character. She took great pride in exhibiting Maidie's brother William's Calvinistic acquirements, when nineteen months old, to the officers of a militia regiment then quartered in Kirkcaldy. This performance was so amusing that it was often repeated, and the little theologian was presented by them with a cap and feathers. Jeanie's glory was "putting him through the carritch" (catechism) in broad Scotch, beginning at the beginning with, "Wha made ye, ma bonnie man?" For the correctness of this and the three next replies Jeanie had no anxiety, but the tone changed to menace, and the closed *nieve* (fist) was shaken in the child's face as she demanded, "Of what are you made?" "DIRT," was the answer uniformly given. "Wull ye never learn to say *dust*, ye thrawn deevil?" with a cuff from the opened hand, was the as inevitable rejoinder.

Here is Maidie's first letter before she was six. The spelling unaltered, and there are no "commoes."

"My dear Isa—I now sit down to answer all your kind and beloved letters which you was so good as to write to me. This is the first time I ever wrote a letter in my Life. There are a great many Girls in the Square and they cry just like a pig when we are under the painfull necessity of putting it to Death. Miss Potune a Lady of my acquaintance praises me dreadfully. I repeated something out of Dean Swift, and she said I was fit for the stage, and you may think I was primmed up with majestick Pride, but upon my word I felt myselfe turn a little birsay—birsay is a word which is a word that William composed which is as you may suppose a little enraged. This horrid fat simpliton says that my Aunt is beautifull which is intirely impossible for that is not her nature."

What a peppery little pen we wield! What could that have been out of the Sardonic Dean? what other child of that age would have used "beloved" as she does? This power of affection, this faculty of *be*loving, and wild hunger to be beloved, comes out more and more. She perilled her all upon it, and it may have been as well—we know, indeed, that it was far better—for her that this wealth of love was so soon withdrawn to its one only infinite Giver and Receiver. This must have been the law of her earthly life. Love was indeed "her Lord and King"; and it was perhaps well for her that she found so soon that her and our only Lord and King Himself is Love.

Here are bits from her Diary at Brachead:—"The day of my existence here has been delightful and enchanting. On Saturday I expected no less than three well

made Bucks the names of whom is here advertised. Mr. Geo. Crackey (Craigie), and Wm. Keith and Jn. Keith—the first is the funniest of every one of them. Mr. Crakey and walked to Crakyhall (Craigiehall) hand in hand in Innocence and matitation (meditation) sweet thinking on the kind love which flows in our tender hearted mind which is overflowing with majestic pleasure no one was ever so polite to me in the hole state of my existence. Mr. Craky you must know is a great Buck and pretty good-looking.

"I am at Ravelston enjoying nature's fresh air. The birds are singing sweetly—the calf doth frish and nature shows her glorious face."

Here is a confession:—"I confess I have been very more like a little young divil than a creature for when Isabella went up stairs to teach me religion and my multiplication and to be good and all my other lessons I stamped with my foot and threw my new hat which she had made on the ground and was sulky and was dreadfully passionate, but she never whiped me but said Marjory go into another room and think what a great crime you are committing letting your temper git the better of you. But I went so sulkily that the Devil got the better of me but she never never whips me so that I think I would be the better of it and the next time that I behave ill I think she should do it for she never does it. . . . Isabella has given me praise for checking my temper for I was sulky even when she was kneeling an hole hour teaching me to write."

Our poor little wifie, *she* has no doubts of the personality of the Devil! "Yesterday I behave extremely ill in God's most holy church for I would never attend myself nor let Isabella attend which was a great crime for

she often, often tells me that when to or three are geathered together God is in the midst of them, and it was the very same Divil that tempted Job that tempted me I am sure; but he resisted Satan though he had boils and many many other misfortunes which I have escaped. . . . I am now going to tell you the horible and wretched plaege (plague) that my multiplication gives me you can't conceive it the most Devilish thing is 8 times 8 and 7 times 7 it is what nature itself cant endure."

This is delicious; and what harm is there in her "Devilish"? it is strong language merely; even old Rowland Hill used to say "he grudged the Devil those rough and ready words." "I walked to that delightful place Crakyhall with a delightful young man beloved by all his friends especially by me his loveress, but I must not talk any more about him for Isa said it is not proper for to speak of gentalmen but I will never forget him! . . . I am very very glad that satan has not given me boils and many other misfortunes—In the holy bible these words are written that the Devil goes like a roaring lyon in search of his pray but the lord lets us escape from him but we" (*pauvre petite!*) "do not strive with this awful Spirit. . . . To-day I pronunced a word which should never come out of a lady's lips it was that I called John a Impudent Bitch. I will tell you what I think made me in so bad a humour is I got one or two of that bad bad sina (senna) tea to-day,"—a better excuse for bad humour and bad language than most.

She has been reading the Book of Esther: "It was a dreadful thing that Haman was hanged on the very gallows which he had prepared for Mordeca to hang him and his ten sons thereon and it was very wrong and cruel to hang his sons for they did not commit the crime; *but*

then Jesus was not then come to teach us to be merciful." This is wise and beautiful—has upon it the very dew of youth and of holiness. Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings He perfects his praise.

"This is Saturday and I am very glad of it because I have play half the Day and I get money too but alas I owe Isabella 4 pence for I am finned 2 pence whenever I bite my nails. Isabella is teaching me to make simme colings nots of interrigations peorids commoes, etc. . . . As this is Sunday I will meditate upon Senciable and Religious subjects. First I should be very thankful I am not a begger."

This amount of meditation and thankfulness seems to have been all she was able for.

"I am going to-morrow to a delightful place, Braehead by name, belonging to Mrs. Crraford, where there is ducks hens bubblyjocks 2 dogs 2 cats and swine which is delightful. I think it is shocking to think that the dog and cat should bear them" (this is a meditation physiological), "and they are drowned after all. I would rather have a man-dog than a woman-dog, because they do not bear like women-dogs; it is a hard case—it is shocking. I cam here to enjoy natures delightful breath it is sweeter than a fial (phial) of rose oil."

Braehead is the farm the historical Jock Howison asked and got from our gay James the Fifth, "the gude man o' Ballengiech," as a reward for the services of his flail when the King had the worst of it at Cramond Brig with the gypsies. The farm is unchanged in size from that time, and still in the unbroken line of the ready and victorious thrasher. Braehead is held on the condition of the possessor being ready to present the King with a ewer and basin to wash his hands, Jock having done this

for his unknown king after the *splore*, and when George the Fourth came to Edinburgh this ceremony was performed in silver at Holyrood. It is a lovely neuk this Braehead, preserved almost as it was two hundred years ago. "Lot and his wife," mentioned by Maidie—two quaintly cropped yew-trees—still thrive; the burn runs as it did in her time, and sings the same quiet tune—as much the same and as different as *Now* and *Then*. The house full of old family relics and pictures, the sun shining on them through the small deep windows with their plate glass; and there, blinking at the sun, and chattering contentedly, is a parrot, that might, for its looks of eld, have been in the ark, and domineered over and *deaved* the dove. Everything about the place is old and fresh.

This is beautiful:—"I am very sorry to say that I forgot God—that is to say I forgot to pray to-day and Isabella told me that I should be thankful that God did not forget me—if he did, O what would become of me if I was in danger and God not friends with me—I must go to unquenchable fire and if I was tempted to sin—how could I resist it O no I will never do it again—no no—if I can help it." (Canny wee wifie!) "My religion is greatly falling off because I don't pray with so much attention when I am saying my prayers, and my character is lost among the Braehead people. I hope I will be religious again—but as for regaining my character I despare for it." (Poor little "habit and repute!")

Her temper, her passion, and her "badness" are almost daily confessed and deplored:—"I will never again trust to my own power, for I see that I cannot be good without God's assistance—I will not trust in my own selfe, and Isa's health will be quite ruined by me—it

will indeed." "Isa has giving me advice, which is, that when I feal Satan beginning to tempt me, that I flea him and he would flea me." "Remorse is the worst thing to bear, and I am afraid that I will fall a marter to it."

Poor dear little sinner!—Here comes the world again: "In my travels I met with a handsome lad named Charles Balfour Esq., and from him I got ofers of marage—offers of marage, did I say? Nay plenty heard me." A fine scent for "breach of promise!"

This is abrupt and strong:—"The Divil is curced and all works. 'T is a fine work *Newton on the profecies*. I wonder if there is another book of poems comes near the Bible. The Divil always girns at the sight of the Bible." "Miss Potune" (her "simpliton" friend) "is very fat; she pretends to be very learned. She says she saw a stone that dropt from the skies; but she is a good Christian." Here come her views on church government:—"An Annibabtist is a thing I am not a member of—I am a Pisplekan (Episcopalian) just now, and" (O you little Laodicean and Latitudinarian!) "a Prisbeteran at Kirkcaldy!"—(*Blandula! Vagula! cœlum et animum mutas quæ trans mare* (i.e., *trans Bodotriam*)*-curris!*)—"my native town." "Sentiment is not what I am acquainted with as yet, though I wish it, and should like to practise it" (!) "I wish I had a great, great deal of gratitude in my heart, in all my body." "There is a new novel published, named "Self-Control" (Mrs. Brunton's)—"a very good maxim forsooth!" This is shocking: "Yesterday a marrade man, named Mr. John Balfour, Esq., offered to kiss me, and offered to marry me, though the man" (a fine directness this!) "was espused, and his wife was present and said he must ask

her permission; but he did not. I think he was ashamed and confounded before 3 gentelman—Mr. Jobson and 2 Mr. Kings." "Mr. Banester's (Bannister's) "Budjet is to-night; I hope it will be a good one. A great many authors have expressed themselves too sentimentally." You are right, Marjorie. "A Mr. Burns writes a beautiful song on Mr. Cunhaming, whose wife desarted him—truly it is a most beautiful one." "I like to read the Fabulous historys, about the histerys of Robin, Dickey, flapsay, and Peccay, and it is very amusing, for some were good birds and others bad, but Peccay was the most dutiful and obedient to her parients." "Thomson is a beautiful author, and Pope, but nothing to Shakespear, of which I have a little knolege. Macbeth is a pretty composition, but awful one." "The Newgate Calender is very instructive" (!) "A sailor called here to say farewell; it must be dreadful to leave his native country when he might get a wife; or perhaps me, for I love him very much. But O I forgot, Isabella forbid me to speak about love." This antiphlogistic regimen and lesson is ill to learn by our Maidie, for here she sins again: "Love is a very papithatick thing" (it is almost a pity to correct this into pathetic), "as well as troublesome and tiresome—but O Isabella forbid me to speak of it." Here are her reflections on a pine-apple: "I think the price of a pine-apple is very dear: it is a whole bright goulden guinea, that might have sustained a poor family." Here is a new vernal simile: "The hedges are sprouting like chicks from the eggs when they are newly hatched or, as the volgar say, *clacked*." "Doctor Swift's works are very funny; I got some of them by heart." "Moreheads sermons are I hear much praised, but I never read sermons of any kind; but I read novelettes

and my Bible, and I never forget it, or my prayers." Bravo Marjorie!

She seems now, when still about six, to have broken out into song:—

EPHIBOL (EPIGRAM OR EPITAPH—WHO KNOWS WHICH?) ON MY DEAR LOVE ISABELLA

Here lies sweet Isabell in bed,
With a night-cap on her head;
Her skin is soft, her face is fair,
And she has very pretty hair;
She and I in bed lies nice,
And undisturbed by rats or mice;
She is disgusted with Mr. Worgan,
Though he plays upon the organ.
Her nails are neat, her teeth are white,
Her eyes are very, very bright;
In a conspicuous town she lives,
And to the poor her money gives:
Here ends sweet Isabella's story,
And may it be much to her glory.

Here are some bits at random:—

Of summer I am very fond
And love to bathe into a pond;
The look of sunshine dies away,
And will not let me out to play;
I love the morning's sun to spy
Glittering through the casement's eye,
The rays of light are very sweet,
And puts away the taste of meat;
The balmy breeze comes down from heaven,
And makes us like for to be living.

"The casawary is an curious bird, and so is the gigantic crane, and the pelican of the wilderness, whose mouth

holds a bucket of fish and water. Fighting is what ladies is not qualyfied for, they would not make a good figure in battle or in a duel. Alas! we females are of little use to our country. The history of all the malcontents as ever was hanged is amusing." Still harping on the "Newgate Calendar"!

"Braehead is extremely pleasant to me by the companie of swine, geese, cocks, etc., and they are the delight of my soul."

"I am going to tell you of a melancholy story. A young turkie of 2 or 3 months old, would you believe it, the father broke its leg, and he killed another! I think he ought to be transported or hanged."

"Queen Street is a very gay one, and so is Princes Street, for all the lads and lasses, besides bucks and beggars, parade there."

"I should like to see a play very much, for I never saw one in all my life, and don't believe I ever shall; but I hope I can be content without going to one. I can be quite happy without my desire being granted."

"Some days ago Isabella had a terrible fit of the toothake, and she walked with a long night-shift at dead of night like a ghost, and I thought she was one. She prayed for nature's sweet restorer—balmy sleep—but did not get it—a ghostly figure indeed she was, enough to make a saint tremble. It made me quiver and shake from top to toe. Superstition is a very mean thing, and should be despised and shunned."

Here is her weakness and her strength again:—"In the love-novels all the heroines are very desperate. Isabella will not allow me to speak about lovers and heroins, and it is too refined for my taste." "Miss Egward's (Edgeworth's) tails are very good, particularly some that are

very much adapted for youth (!) as Laz Laurance and Tarelton, False Keys, etc. etc."

"Tom Jones and Grey's Elegey in a country churchyard are both excellent, and much spoke of by both sex, particularly by the men." Are our Marjories now-a-days better or worse because they cannot read Tom Jones unharmed? More better than worse; but who among them can repeat Gray's Lines on a Distant Prospect of Eton College as could our Maidie?

Here is some more of her prattle: "I went into Isabella's bed to make her smile like the Genius Demedicus" (the Venus de Medicis) "or the statute in an ancient Greece, but she fell asleep in my very face, at which my anger broke forth, so that I awoke her from a comfortable nap. All was now hushed up again, but again my anger burst forth at her biding me get up."

She begins thus loftily—

> Death the righteous love to see,
> But from it doth the wicked flee.

Then suddenly breaks off (as if with laughter)—

> I am sure they fly as fast as their legs can carry them!
>
> There is a thing I love to see,
> That is our monkey catch a flee.
>
> I love in Isa's bed to lie,
> Oh, such a joy and luxury!
> The bottom of the bed I sleep,
> And with great care within I creep;
> Oft I embrace her feet of lillys,
> But she has goten all the pillys.
> Her neck I never can embrace,
> But I do hug her feet in place.

How childish and yet how strong and free is her use

of words!—"I lay at the foot of the bed because Isabella said I disturbed her by continial fighting and kicking, but I was very dull, and continially at work reading the Arabian Nights, which I could not have done if I had slept at the top. I am reading the Mysteries of Udolpho. I am much interested in the fate of poor, poor Emily."

Here is one of her swains:—

Very soft and white his cheeks,
His hair is red, and gray his breeks;
His tooth is like the daisy fair,
His only fault is in his hair.

This is a higher flight:—

DEDICATED TO MRS. H. CRAWFORD BY THE AUTHOR, M. F.

Three turkeys fair their last have breathed,
And now this world forever leaved;
Their father, and their mother too,
They sigh and weep as well as you;
Indeed, the rats their bones have crunched,
Into eternity theire laanched.
A direful death indeed they had,
As wad put any parent mad;
But she was more than usual calm,
She did not give a single dam.

This last word is saved from all sin by its tender age, not to speak of the want of the *n*. We fear "she" is the abandoned mother, in spite of her previous sighs and tears.

"Isabella says when we pray we should pray fervently, and not rattel over a prayer—for that we are kneeling at the footstool of our Lord and Creator, who saves us from eternal damnation, and from unquestionable fire and brimston."

She has a long poem on Mary Queen of Scots:—

Queen Mary was much loved by all,
Both by the great and by the small,
But hark! her soul to heaven doth rise!
And I suppose she has gained a prize—
For I do think she would not go
Into the *awful* place below;
There is a thing that I must tell,
Elizabeth went to fire and hell;
He who would teach her to be civil,
It must be her great friend the divil!

She hits off Darnley well:—

A noble's son, a handsome lad,
By some queer way or other, had
Got quite the better of her heart,
With him she always talked apart;
Silly he was, but very fair,
A greater buck was not found there.

"By some queer way or other"; is not this the general case and the mystery, young ladies and gentlemen? Goethe's doctrine of "elective affinities" discovered by our Pet Maidie.

SONNET TO A MONKEY

O lively, O most charming pug
Thy graceful air, and heavenly mug;
The beauties of his mind do shine,
And every bit is shaped and fine.
Your teeth are whiter than the snow,
Your a great buck, your a great beau;
Your eyes are of so nice a shape,
More like a Christian's than an ape;
Your cheek is like the rose's blume,
Your hair is like the raven's plume;
His nose's cast is of the Roman,
He is a very pretty woman.
I could not get a rhyme for Roman,
So was obliged to call him woman.

This last joke is good. She repeats it when writing of James the Second being killed at Roxburgh:—

> He was killed by a cannon splinter,
> Quite in the middle of the winter;
> Perhaps it was not at that time,
> But I can get no other rhyme!'

Here is one of her last letters, dated Kirkcaldy, 12th October, 1811. You can see how her nature is deepening and enriching:—"My Dear Mother,—You will think that I entirely forget you but I assure you that you are greatly mistaken. I think of you always and often sigh to think of the distance between us two loving creatures of nature. We have regular hours for all our occupations first at 7 o'clock we go to the dancing and come home at 8 we then read our Bible and get our repeating and then play till ten then we get our music till 11 when we get our writing and accounts we sew from 12 till 1 after which I get my gramer and then work till five. At 7 we come and knit till 8 when we dont go to the dancing. This is an exact description. I must take a hasty farewell to her whom I love, reverence and doat on and who I hope thinks the same of

Marjory Fleming.

"P. S.—An old pack of cards (!) would be very exceptible."

This other is a month earlier:—"My dear little Mama—I was truly happy to hear that you were all well. We are surrounded with measles at present on every side, for the Herons got it, and Isabella Heron was near Death's Door, and one night her father lifted her out of bed and she fell down as they thought lifeless. Mr. Heron said, 'That lassie's deed noo'—'I'm no deed yet.' She then threw up a big worm nine inches and a half

long. I have begun dancing, but am not very fond of it, for the boys strikes and mocks me—I have been another night at the dancing; I like it better. I will write to you as often as I can; but I am afraid not every week. *I long for you with the longings of a child to embrace you —to fold you in my arms. I respect you with all the respect due to a mother. You dont know how I love you. So I shall remain, your loving child*—M. FLEMING."

What rich involution of love in the words marked! Here are some lines to her beloved Isabella, in July, 1811:—

> There is a thing that I do want,
> With you these beauteous walks to haunt,
> We would be happy if you would
> Try to come over if you could.
> Then I would all quite happy be
> *Now and for all eternity.*
> My mother is so very sweet,
> *And checks my appetite to eat;*
> My father shows us what to do;
> But O I'm sure that I want you.
> I have no more of poetry;
> O Isa do remember me,
> And try to love your Marjory.

In a letter from "Isa" to

> Miss Muff Maidie Marjory Fleming,
> favoured by Rare Rear-Admiral Fleming,

she says: "I long much to see you, and talk over all our old stories together, and to hear you read and repeat. I am pining for my old friend Cesario, and poor Lear, and wicked Richard. How is the dear Multiplication table going on? are you still as much attached to 9 times 9 as you used to be?"

But this dainty, bright thing is about to flee—to come "quick to confusion." The measles she writes of seized her, and she died on the 19th of December, 1811. The day before her death, Sunday, she sat up in bed, worn and thin, her eye gleaming as with the light of a coming world, and with a tremulous, old voice repeated the following lines by Burns—heavy with the shadow of death, and lit with the fantasy of the judgment-seat—the publican's prayer in paraphrase:—

Why am I loth to leave this earthly scene?
Have I so found it full of pleasing charms?
Some drops of joy, with draughts of ill between,
Some gleams of sunshine 'mid renewing storms.
Is it departing pangs my soul alarms?
Or death's unlovely, dreary, dark abode?
For guilt, for GUILT my terrors are in arms;
I tremble to approach an angry God,
And justly smart beneath his sin-avenging rod.

Fain would I say, forgive my foul offence,
Fain promise never more to disobey;
But should my Author health again dispense,
Again I might forsake fair virtue's way,
Again in folly's path might go astray,
Again exalt the brute and sink the man.
Then how should I for heavenly mercy pray,
Who act so counter heavenly mercy's plan,
Who sin so oft have mourned, yet to temptation ran?

O thou great Governor of all below,
If I might dare a lifted eye to thee,
Thy nod can make the tempest cease to blow,
And still the tumult of the raging sea;
With that controlling power assist even me
Those headstrong furious passions to confine,
For all unfit I feel my powers to be
So rule their torrent in the allowed line;
O aid me with thy help, OMNIPOTENCE DIVINE.

It is more affecting than we care to say to read her mother's and Isabella Keith's letters written immediately after her death. Old and withered, tattered and pale, they are now: but when you read them how quick, how throbbing with life and love! how rich in that language of affection which only women, and Shakespeare, and Luther can use—that power of detaining the soul over the beloved object and its loss.

K. Philip to Constance.
You are as fond of grief as of your child.
Const. Grief fills the room up of my absent child,
Lies in his bed, walks up and down with me;
Puts on his pretty looks, repeats his words,
Remembers me of all his gracious parts,
Stuffs out his vacant garments with his form.
Then I have reason to be fond of grief.

What variations cannot love play on this one string!

In her first letter to Miss Keith, Mrs. Fleming says of her dead Maidie:—"Never did I behold so beautiful an object. It resembled the finest wax-work. There was in the countenance an expression of sweetness and serenity which seemed to indicate that the pure spirit had anticipated the joys of heaven ere it quitted the mortal frame. To tell you what your Maidie said of you would fill volumes; for you was the constant theme of her discourse, the subject of her thoughts, and ruler of her actions. The last time she mentioned you was a few hours before all sense save that of suffering was suspended, when she said to Dr. Johnstone, 'If you will let me out at the New Year, I will be quite contented.' I asked what made her so anxious to get out then. 'I want to purchase a New Year's gift for Isa Keith with the sixpence you gave me for being patient in the measles; and

I would like to choose it myself.' I do not remember her speaking afterwards, except to complain of her head, till just before she expired, when she articulated, 'O mother, mother!'"

Do we make too much of this little child, who has been in her grave in Abbotshall Kirkyard these fifty and more years? We may of her cleverness—not of her affectionateness, her nature. What a picture the *animosa infans* gives us of herself, her vivacity, her passionateness, her precocious love-making, her passion for nature, for swine, for all living things, her reading, her turn for expression, her satire, her frankness, her little sins and rages, her great repentances! We don't wonder Walter Scott carried her off in the neuk of his plaid, and played himself with her for hours.

The year before she died, when in Edinburgh, she was at a Twelfth Night supper at Scott's, in Castle Street. The company had all come—all but Marjorie. Scott's familiars, whom we all know, were there—all were come but Marjorie; and all were dull because Scott was dull. "Where's that bairn? what can have come over her? I'll go myself and see." And he was getting up, and would have gone; when the bell rang, and in came Duncan Roy and his henchman Tougald, with the sedan chair, which was brought right into the lobby, and its top raised. And there, in its darkness and dingy old cloth, sat Maidie in white, her eyes gleaming, and Scott bending over her in ecstasy—"hung over her enamoured." "Sit ye there, my dautie, till they all see you"; and forthwith he brought them all. You can fancy the scene. And he lifted her up and marched to his seat with her on his stout shoulder, and set her down beside him; and then

began the night, and such a night! Those who knew Scott best said, that night was never equalled; Maidie and he were the stars; and she gave them Constance's speeches and *Helvellyn*, the ballad then much in vogue, and all her *répertoire*—Scott showing her off, and being ofttimes rebuked by her for his intentional blunders.

We are indebted for the following—and our readers will be not unwilling to share our obligations—to her sister:—"Her birth was 15th January, 1803; her death 19th December, 1811. I take this from her Bibles.* I believe she was a child of robust health, of much vigour of body, and beautifully formed arms, and until her last illness, never was an hour in bed. She was niece to Mrs. Keith, residing in No. 1 North Charlotte Street, who was *not* Mrs. Murray Keith, although very intimately acquainted with that old lady. My aunt was a daughter of Mr. James Rae, surgeon, and married the younger son of old Keith of Ravelstone. Corstorphine Hill belonged to my aunt's husband; and his eldest son, Sir Alexander Keith, succeeded his uncle to both Ravelstone and Dunnottar. The Keiths were not connected by relationship with the Howisons of Braehead; but my grandfather and grandmother (who was), a daughter of Cant of Thurston and Giles-Grange, were on the most intimate footing with *our* Mrs. Keith's grandfather and grandmother; and so it has been for three generations, and the friendship consummated by my cousin William Keith marrying Isabella Craufurd.

"As to my aunt and Scott, they were on a very intimate footing. He asked my aunt to be godmother to his

* "Her Bible is before me; *a pair*, as then called; the faded marks are just as she placed them. There is one at David's lament over Jonathan."

eldest daughter Sophia Charlotte. I had a copy of Miss Edgeworth's 'Rosamond, and Harry and Lucy' for long, which was a 'gift to Marjorie from Walter Scott,' probably the first edition of that attractive series, for it wanted 'Frank,' which is always now published as part of the series, under the title of 'Early Lessons.' I regret to say these little volumes have disappeared."

"Sir Walter was no relation of Marjorie's, but of the Keiths, through the Swintons; and, like Marjorie, he stayed much at Ravelstone in his early days, with his grand-aunt Mrs. Keith; and it was while seeing him there as a boy, that another aunt of mine composed, when he was about fourteen, the lines prognosticating his future fame that Lockhart ascribes in his Life to Mrs. Cockburn, authoress of 'The Flowers of the Forest':

> Go on, dear youth, the glorious path pursue
> Which bounteous Nature kindly smooths for you;
> Go bid the seeds her hands have sown arise,
> By timely culture, to their native skies;
> Go, and employ the poet's heavenly art,
> Not merely to delight, but mend the heart.

Mrs. Keir was my aunt's name, another of Dr. Rae's daughters." We cannot better end than in words from this same pen: "I have to ask you to forgive my anxiety in gathering up the fragments of Marjorie's last days, but I have an almost sacred feeling to all that pertains to her. You are quite correct in stating that measles were the cause of her death. My mother was struck by the patient quietness manifested by Marjorie during this illness, unlike her ardent, impulsive nature; but love and poetic feeling were unquenched. When Dr. Johnstone rewarded her submissiveness with a sixpence, the request speedily followed that she might get out ere New Year's

day came. When asked why she was so desirous of getting out, she immediately rejoined, 'Oh, I am so anxious to buy something with my sixpence for my dear Isa Keith.' Again, when lying very still, her mother asked her if there was anything she wished: 'Oh yes! if you would just leave the room door open a wee bit, and play "The Land o' the Leal," and I will lie and *think*, and enjoy myself' (this is just as stated to me by her mother and mine). Well, the happy day came, alike to parents and child, when Marjorie was allowed to come forth from the nursery to the parlour. It was Sabbath evening, and after tea. My father, who idolised this child, and never afterward in my hearing mentioned her name, took her in his arms; and while walking her up and down th room, she said, 'Father, I will repeat something to you; what would you like?' He said, 'Just choose yourself, Maidie.' She hesitated for a moment between the paraphrase, 'Few are thy days, and full of woe,' and the lines of Burns already quoted, but decided on the latter, a remarkable choice for a child. The repeating these lines seemed to stir up the depths of feeling in her soul. She asked to be allowed to write a poem; there was a doubt whether it would be right to allow her, in case of hurting her eyes. She pleaded earnestly, 'Just this once'; the point was yielded, her slate was given her, and with great rapidity she wrote an address of fourteen lines, 'to her loved cousin on the author's recovery,' her last work on earth:

> Oh! Isa, pain did visit me,
> I was at the last extremity;
> How often did I think of you,
> I wished your graceful form to view,
> To clasp you in my weak embrace,
> Indeed I thought I'd run my race:

Good care, I'm sure, was of me taken,
But still indeed I was much shaken,
At last I daily strength did gain,
And oh! at last, away went pain;
At length the doctor thought I might
Stay in the parlour all the night;
I now continue so to do,
Farewell to Nancy and to you.

She went to bed apparently well, awoke in the middle of the night with the old cry of woe to a mother's heart, 'My head, my head!' Three days of the dire malady, 'water in the head,' followed, and the end came."

Soft, silken primrose, fading timelessly.

It is needless, it is impossible, to add anything to this: the fervour, the sweetness, the flush of poetic ecstasy, the lovely and gloing eye, the perfect nature of that bright and warm intelligence, that darling child—Lady Nairne's words, and the old tune, stealing up from the depths of the human heart, deep calling unto deep, gentle and strong like the waves of the great sea hushing themselves to sleep in the dark; the words of Burns touching the kindred chord, her last numbers "wildly sweet" traced, with thin and eager fingers, already touched by the last enemy and friend—*moriens canit*—and that love which is so soon to be her everlasting light, is her song's burden to the end,

She set as sets the morning star, which goes
Not down behind the darkened west, nor hides
Obscured among the tempests of the sky,
But melts away into the light of heaven."

—John Brown, M.D.

XVI

BEING A BOY

ONE of the best things in the world to be is a boy; it requires no experience, though it needs some practice to be a good one. The disadvantage of the position is that it does not last long enough; it is soon over; just as you get used to being a boy, you have to be something else, with a good deal more work to do and not half so much fun. And yet every boy is anxious to be a man, and is very uneasy with the restrictions that are put upon him as a boy. Good fun as it is to yoke up the calves and play work, there is not a boy on a farm but would rather drive a yoke of oxen at real work. What a glorious feeling it is, indeed, when a boy is for the first time given the long whip and permitted to drive the oxen, walking by their side, swinging the long lash, and shouting "Gee, Buck!" "Haw, Golden!" "Whoa, Bright!" and all the rest of that remarkable language, until he is red in the face, and all the neighbours for half a mile are aware that something unusual is going on. If I were a boy, I am not sure but I would rather drive the oxen than have a birthday.

The proudest day of my life was one day when I rode on the neap of the cart, and drove the oxen, all alone, with a load of apples to the cider-mill. I was so little, that it was a wonder that I didn't fall off, and get under the broad wheels. Nothing could make a boy, who cared anything for his appearance, feel flatter than to be

run over by the broad tire of a cartwheel. But I never heard of one who was, and I don't believe one ever will be. As I said, it was a great day for me, but I don't remember that the oxen cared much about it. They sagged along in their clumsy way, switching their tails in my face occasionally, and now and then giving a lurch to this or that side of the road, attracted by a choice tuft of grass. And then I "came the Julius Cæsar" over them, if you will allow me to use such a slang expression, a liberty I never should permit you. I don't know that Julius Cæsar ever drove cattle, though he must often have seen the peasants from the Campagna "haw" and "gee" them round the Forum (of course in Latin, a language that those cattle understood as well as ours do English); but what I mean is that I stood up and "hollered" with all my might, as everybody does with oxen, as if they were born deaf, and whacked them with the long lash over the head, just as the big folks did when they drove. I think now that it was a cowardly thing to crack the patient old fellows over the face and eyes, and make them wink in their meek manner. If I am ever a boy again on a farm, I shall speak gentle to the oxen, and not go screaming round the farm like a crazy man; and I shall not hit them a cruel cut with the lash every few minutes, because it looks big to do so and I cannot think of anything else to do. I never like lickings myself, and I don't know why an ox should like them, especially as he cannot reason about the moral improvement he is to get out of them.

Speaking of Latin reminds me that I once taught my cows Latin. I don't mean that I taught them to read it, for it is very difficult to teach a cow to read Latin or any of the dead languages—a cow cares more for her

cud than she does for all the classics put together. But if you begin early you can teach a cow, or a calf (if you can teach a calf anything, which I doubt), Latin as well as English. There were ten cows, which I had to escort to and from pasture night and morning. To these cows I gave the names of the Roman numerals, beginning with Unus and Duo, and going up to Decem. Decem was of course the biggest cow of the party, or at least she was the ruler of the others, and had the place of honour in the stable and everywhere else. I admire cows, and especially the exactness with which they define their social position. In this case, Decem could "lick" Novem, and Novem could "lick" Octo, and so on down to Unus, who couldn't lick anybody, except her own calf. I suppose I ought to have called the weakest cow Una instead of Unus, considering her sex; but I didn't care much to teach the cows the declensions of adjectives, in which I was not very well up myself; and besides it would be of little use to a cow. People who devote themselves too severely to study of the classics are apt to become dried up; and you should never do anything to dry up a cow. Well, these ten cows knew their names after a while, at least they appeared to, and would take their places as I called them. At least, if Octo attempted to get before Novem in going through the bars (I have heard people speak of a "pair of bars" when there were six or eight of them), or into the stable, the matter of precedence was settled then and there, and once settled there was no dispute about it afterward. Novem either put her horns into Octo's ribs, and Octo shambled to one side, or else the two locked horns and tried the game of push and gore until one gave up. Nothing is stricter than the etiquette of a party of cows.

There is nothing in royal courts equal to it; rank is exactly settled, and the same individuals always have the precedence. You know that at Windsor Castle, if the Royal Three-Ply Silver Stick should happen to get in front of the Most Royal Double-and-Twisted Golden Rod, when the court is going in to dinner, something so dreadful would happen that we don't dare to think of it. It is certain that the soup would get cold while the Golden Rod was pitching the Silver Stick out of the Castle window into the moat, and perhaps the island of Great Britian itself would split in two. But the people are very careful that it never shall happen, so we shall probably never know what the effect would be. Among cows, as I say, the question is settled in short order, and in a different manner from what it sometimes is in other society. It is said that in other society there is sometimes a great scramble for the first place, for the leadership as it is called, and that women, and men too, fight for what is called position; and in order to be first they will injure their neighbours by telling stories about them and by backbiting, which is the meanest kind of biting there is, not excepting the bite of fleas. But in cow society there is nothing of this detraction in order to get the first place at the crib, or the farther stall in the stable. If the question arises, the cows turn in, horns and all, and settle it with one square fight, and that ends it. I have often admired this trait in cows.

Besides Latin, I used to try to teach the cows a little poetry, and it is a very good plan. It does not do the cows much good, but it is very good exercise for a boy farmer. I used to commit to memory as good short poems as I could find (the cows liked to listen to Thanatopsis about as well as anything), and repeat them when

I went to the pasture, and as I drove the cows home through the sweet ferns and down the rocky slopes. It improves a boy's elocution a great deal more than driving oxen.

It is a fact, also, that if a boy repeats Thanatopsis while he is milking, that operation acquires a certain dignity.

—Charles Dudley Warner.

XVII

THE DELIGHTS OF FARMING

THERE are so many bright spots in the life of a farm-boy, that I sometimes think I should like to live the life over again; I should almost be willing to be a girl if it were not for the chores. There is a great comfort to a boy in the amount of work he can get rid of doing. It is sometimes astonishing how slow he can go on an errand, he who leads the school in a race. The world is new and interesting to him, and there is so much to take his attention off, when he is sent to do anything. Perhaps he couldn't explain, himself, why, when he is sent to the neighbour's after yeast, he stops to stone the frogs; he is not exactly cruel, but he wants to see if he can hit 'em. No other living thing can go so slow as a boy sent on an errand. His legs seem to be lead, unless he happens to espy a woodchuck in an adjoining lot, when he gives chase to it like a deer; and it is a curious fact about boys, that two will be a great deal slower in doing anything than one, and that the more you have to help on a piece of work the less is accomplished. Boys have a great power of helping each other to do nothing; and they are so innocent about it, and unconscious. "I went as quick as ever I could," says the boy; his father asks him why he didn't stay all night, when he has been absent three hours on a ten-minute errand. The sarcasm has no effect on the boy.

Going after the cows was a serious thing in my day.

I had to climb a hill, which was covered with wild strawberries in the season. Could any boy pass by those ripe berries? And then in the fragrant hill pasture there were beds of wintergreen with red berries, tufts of columbine, roots of sassafras to be dug, and dozens of things good to eat or to smell, that I could not resist. It some times even lay in my way to climb a tree to look for a crow's nest, or to swing in the top, and to try if I could see the steeple of the village church. It became very important sometimes for me to see that steeple; and in the midst of my investigations the tin horn would blow a great blast from the farmhouse, which would send a cold chill down my back in the hottest days. I knew what it meant. It had a frightfully impatient quaver in it, not at all like the sweet note that called us to dinner from the hayfield. It said, "Why on earth doesn't that boy come home? It is almost dark, and the cows ain't milked!" And that was the time the cows had to start into a brisk pace and make up for lost time. I wonder if any boy ever drove the cows home late, who did not say that the cows were at the very farther end of the pasture, and that "Old Brindle" was hidden in the woods, and he couldn't find her for ever so long! The brindle cow is the boy's scape-goat, many a time.

No other boy knows how to appreciate a holiday as the farm-boy does; and his best ones are of a peculiar kind. Going fishing is of course one sort. The excitement of rigging up the tackle, digging the bait, and the anticipation of great luck; these are pure pleasures, enjoyed because they are rare. Boys who can go a-fishing any time care but little for it. Tramping all day through bush and brier, fighting flies and mosquitoes, and branches that tangle the line, and snags that break

the hook, and returning home late and hungry, with wet feet and a string of speckled trout on a willow twig, and having the family crowd out at the kitchen door to look at 'em, and say, "Pretty well done for you, bub; did you catch that big one yourself"—this is also pure happiness, the like of which the boy will never have again, not if he comes to be selectman and deacon and to "keep store."

But the holidays I recall with delight were the two days in spring and fall, when we went to the distant pasture-land, in a neighbouring town, maybe, to drive thither the young cattle and colts, and to bring them back again. It was a wild and rocky upland where our great pasture was, many miles from home, the road to it running by a brawling river, and up a dashing brookside among great hills. What a day's adventure it was! It was like a journey to Europe. The night before, I could scarcely sleep for thinking of it, and there was no trouble about getting me up at sunrise that morning. The breakfast was eaten, the luncheon was packed in a large basket, with bottles of root-beer and a jug of switchel, which packing I superintended with the greatest interest; and then the cattle were to be collected for the march, and the horses hitched up. Did I shirk any duty? Was I slow? I think not. I was willing to run my legs off after the frisky steers, who seemed to have an idea they were going on a lark, and frolicked about, dashing into all gates, and through all bars except the right ones; and how cheerfully I did yell at them; it was a glorious chance to "holler," and I have never since heard any public speaker on the stump or at camp-meeting who could make more noise. I have often thought it fortunate that the amount of noise in a boy does not increase

in proportion to his size; if it did the world could not contain it.

The whole day was full of excitement and of freedom. We were away from the farm, which to a boy is one of the best parts of farming; we saw other farms and other people at work; I had the pleasure of marching along, and swinging my whip, past boys whom I knew, who were picking up stones. Every turn of the road, every bend and rapid of the river, the great boulders by the wayside, the watering-troughs, the giant pine that had been struck by lightning, the mysterious covered bridge over the river where it was most swift and rocky and foamy, the chance eagle in the blue sky, the sense of going somewhere—why, as I recall all these things I feel that even the Prince Imperial, as he used to dash on horseback through the Bois de Boulogne, with fifty mounted hussars clattering at his heels, and crowds of people cheering, could not have been as happy as was I, a boy in short jacket and shorter pantaloons, trudging in the dust that day behind the steers and colts, cracking my black-stock whip.

I wish the journey would never end; but at last, by noon, we reach the pastures and turn in the herd; and after making the tour of the lots to make sure there are no breaks in the fences, we take our luncheon from the wagon and eat it under the trees by the spring. This is the supreme moment of the day. This is the way to live; this is like the Swiss Family Robinson, and all the rest of my delightful acquaintances in romance. Baked beans, rye-and-indian bread (moist, remember), doughnuts and cheese, pie, and root beer. What richness! You may live to dine at Delmonico's, or, if those Frenchmen do not eat each other up, at Philippe's, in the Rue

Montorgueil in Paris, where the dear old Thackeray used to eat as good a dinner as anybody; but you will get there neither doughnuts, nor pie, nor root beer, nor anything so good as that luncheon at noon in the old pasture, high among the Massachusetts hills! Nor will you ever, if you live to be the oldest boy in the world, have any holiday equal to the one I have described. But I always regretted that I did not take along a fish-line, just to "throw in" the brook we passed. I know there were trout there.

—Charles Dudley Warner.

XVIII

THE LITTLE VIOLINIST

THIS story is no invention of mine. I could not invent anything half so lovely and pathetic as seems to me the incident which has come ready-made to my hand.

Some of you, doubtless, have heard of James Speaight, the infant violinist, or Young Americus, as he was called. He was born in London, I believe, and was only four years old when his father brought him to this country about three years ago. Since that time he has appeared in concerts and various entertainments in many of our principal cities, attracting unusual attention by his musical skill. I confess, however, that I had not heard of him until last month, though it seems he had previously given two or three public performances in the city where I live. I had not heard of him, I say, until last month; but since then I do not think a day has passed when this child's face has not risen up in my memory—the little half-sad face, as I saw it once, with its large serious eyes and infantile mouth.

I have, I trust, great tenderness for all children; but I know that I have special place in my heart for those poor little creatures who figure in circuses and shows, or elsewhere, as "infant prodigies." Heaven help such little folk! It was an unkind fate that did not make them commonplace, stupid, happy girls and boys like our own Fannys and Charleys and Harrys. Poor little waifs,

that never know any babyhood or childhood—sad human midgets, that flutter for a moment in the glare of the gas-lights, and are gone. Pitiful little children, whose tender limbs and minds are so torn and strained by thoughtless task-masters, that it seems scarcely a regrettable thing when the circus caravan halts awhile on its route to make a small grave by the wayside.

I never witness a performance of child-acrobats, or the exhibition of any forced talent, physical or mental, on the part of children, without protesting, at least in my own mind, against the blindness and cruelty of their parents or guardians, or whoever has care of them.

I saw at the theatre, the other night, two tiny girls—mere babies they were—doing such feats upon a bar of wood suspended from the ceiling as made my blood run cold. They were twin sisters, these mites, with that old young look on their faces,which all such unfortunates have. I hardly dared glance at them, up there in the air, hanging by their feet from the swinging bar, twisting their fragile spines and distorting their poor little bodies, when they ought to have been nestled in soft blankets in a cosey chamber, with the angels that guard the sleep of little children hovering above them. I hope that the father of those two babies will read and ponder this page, on which I record not alone my individual protest, but the protest of hundreds of men and women who took no pleasure in that performance, but witnessed it with a pang of pity.

There is a Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Dumb Animals. There ought to be a Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Little Children; and a certain influential gentleman, who does some things well and

other things very badly, ought to attend to it. The name of this gentleman is Public Opinion.

But to my story.

One September morning, about five years and a half ago, there wandered to my fireside, hand in hand, two small personages who requested in a foreign language, which I understood at once, to be taken in and fed and clothed and sent to school and loved and tenderly cared for. Very modest of them—was it not?—in view of the fact that I had never seen either of them before. To all intents and purposes they were perfect strangers to *me*. What was my surprise when it turned out (just as if it were in a fairy legend) that these were my own sons! When I say they came hand in hand, it is to advise you that these two boys were twins, like that pair of tiny girls I just mentioned.

These young gentlemen are at present known as Charley and Talbot, in the household, and to a very limited circle of acquaintances outside; but as Charley has declared his intention to become a circus-rider, and Talbot, who has not so soaring an ambition, has resolved to be a policeman, it is likely the world will hear of them before long. In the meantime, and with a view to the severe duties of the professions selected, they are learning the alphabet, Charley vaulting over the hard letters with an agility which promises well for his career as circus-rider, and Talbot collaring the slippery S's and pursuing the suspicious X Y Z's with the promptness and boldness of a night-watchman.

Now it is my pleasure not only to feed and clothe Masters Charley and Talbot as if they were young princes or dukes, but to look to it that they do not wear out their ingenious minds by too much study. So I

occasionally take them to a puppet-show or a musical entertainment, and always in holiday time to see a pantomime. This last is their especial delight. It is a fine thing to behold the businesslike air with which they climb into their seats in the parquet, and the gravity with which they immediately begin to read the play-bill upside down. Then, between the acts, the solemnity, with which they extract the juice from an orange, through a hole made with a lead-pencil, is also a noticeable thing.

Their knowledge of the mysteries of Fairyland is at once varied and profound. Everything delights, but nothing astonishes them. That persons covered with spangles should dive headlong through the floor; that fairy queens should step out of the trunks of trees; that the poor wood-cutter's cottage should change, in the twinkling of an eye, into a glorious palace or a goblin grotto under the sea, with crimson fountains and golden staircases and silver foliage—all that is a matter of course. This is the kind of world they live in at present. If these things happened at home they would not be astonished.

The other day, it was just before Christmas, I saw the boys attentively regarding a large pumpkin which lay on the kitchen floor, waiting to be made into pies. If that pumpkin had suddenly opened, if wheels had sprouted out on each side, and if the two kittens playing with an onion-skin by the range had turned into milk-white ponies and harnessed themselves to this Cinderella coach, neither Charley nor Talbot would have considered it an unusual circumstance.

The pantomime which is usually played at the Boston Theatre during the holidays is to them positive proof that the stories of Cinderella and Jack and the Beanstalk and Jack the Giant Killer have historical solidity. They

like to be reassured on that point. So one morning last January, when I informed Charley and Talbot, at the breakfast-table, that Prince Rupert and his court had come to town,

> Some in jags,
> Some in rags,
> And some in velvet gown,

the news was received with great satisfaction; for this meant that we were to go to the play.

For the sake of the small folk, who could not visit him at night, Prince Rupert was gracious enough to appear every Saturday afternoon during the month. We decided to wait upon his Highness at one of his matinées.

You would never have dreamed that the sun was shining bright outside, if you had been with us in the theatre that afternoon. All the window-shutters were closed, and the great glass chandelier hanging from the gaily painted dome was one blaze of light. But brighter even than the jets of gas were the ruddy, eager faces of countless boys and girls, fringing the balconies and crowded into the seats below, longing for the play to begin. And nowhere were there two merrier or more eager faces than those of Charley and Talbot, pecking now and then at a brown paper cone filled with white grapes, which I held, and waiting for the solemn green curtain to roll up, and disclose the coral realm of the Naiad Queen.

I shall touch very lightly on the literary aspects of the play. Its plot, like that of the realistic novel, was of so subtile a nature as not to be visible to the naked eye. I doubt if the dramatist himself could have explained it,

even if he had been so condescending as to attempt to do so. There was a bold young prince—Prince Rupert, of course—who went into Wonderland in search of adventures. He reached Wonderland by leaping from the castle of Drachenfels into the Rhine. Then there was one Snaps, the prince's valet, who did not in the least want to go, but went, and got terribly frightened by the Green Demons of the Chrysolite Cavern, which made us all laugh—it being such a pleasant thing to see somebody else scared nearly to death. Then there were knights in brave tin armour, and armies of fair pre-Raphaelite Amazons in all the colours of the rainbow, and troops of unhappy slave-girls, who did nothing but smile and wear beautiful dresses, and dance continually to the most delightful music. Now you were in an enchanted castle on the banks of the Rhine, and now you were in a cave of amethysts and diamonds at the bottom of the river—scene following scene with such bewildering rapidity that finally you did not quite know where you were.

But what interested me most, and what pleased Charley and Talbot even beyond the Naiad Queen herself, was the little violinist who came to the German Court, and played before Prince Rupert and his bride.

It was such a little fellow! He was not more than a year older than my own boys, and not much taller. He had a very sweet, sensitive face, with large gray eyes, in which there was a deep-settled expression that I do not like to see in a child. Looking at his eyes alone, you would have said he was sixteen or seventeen, and he was merely a baby!

I do not know enough of music to assert that he had wonderful genius, or any genius at all; but it seemed to

me he played charmingly, and with the touch of a natural musician.

At the end of his piece, he was lifted over the footlights of the stage into the orchestra, where, with the conductor's baton in his hand, he directed the musicians in playing one or two difficult compositions. In this he evinced a carefully trained ear and a perfect understanding of the music.

I wanted to hear the little violin again; but as he made his bow to the audience and ran off, it was with a half-wearied air, and I did not join with my neighbours in calling him back. "There's another performance to-night," I reflected, "and the little fellow isn't very strong." He came out, however, and bowed, but did not play again.

All the way home from the theatre my children were full of the little violinist, and as they went along, chattering and frolicking in front of me, and getting under my feet like a couple of young spaniels (they did not look unlike two small brown spaniels, with their fur-trimmed overcoats and sealskin caps and ear-lappets), I could not help thinking how different the poor little musician's lot was from theirs.

He was only six years and a half old, and had been before the public nearly two years. What hours of toil and weariness he must have been passing through at the very time when my little ones were being rocked and petted and shielded from every ungentle wind that blows! And what an existence was his now—travelling from city to city, practising at every spare moment, and performing night after night in some close theatre or concert-room when he should be drinking in that deep, refreshing slumber which childhood needs! However much

he was loved by those who had charge of him, and they must have treated him kindly, it was a hard life for the child.

He ought to have been turned out into the sunshine; that pretty violin—one can easily understand that he was fond of it himself—ought to have been taken away from him, and a kite-string placed in his hand instead. If God had set the germ of a great musician or a great composer in that slight body, surely it would have been wise to let the precious gift ripen and flower in its own good season.

This is what I thought, walking home in the amber glow of the wintry sunset; but my boys saw only the bright side of the tapestry, and would have liked nothing better than to change places with little James Speaight. To stand in the midst of Fairyland, and play beautiful tunes on a toy fiddle, while all the people clapped their hands—what could quite equal that? Charley began to think it was no such grand thing to be a circus-rider, and the dazzling career of policeman had lost something of its glamour in the eyes of Talbot.

It is my custom every night, after the children are snug in their nest and the gas is turned down, to sit on the side of the bed and chat with them five or ten minutes. If anything has gone wrong through the day, it is never alluded to at this time. None but the most agreeable topics are discussed. I make it a point that the boys shall go to sleep with untroubled hearts. When our chat is ended, they say their prayers. Now, among the pleas which they offer up for the several members of the family, they frequently intrude the claims of rather curious objects for Divine compassion. Sometimes it is the rocking-horse that has broken a leg, sometimes it

is Shem or Japhet, who has lost an arm in disembarking from Noah's ark; Pinky and Inky, the kittens, and Rob, the dog, are never forgotten.

So it did not surprise me at all this Saturday night when both boys prayed God to watch over and bless the little violinist.

The next morning at the breakfast-table, when I unfolded the newspaper, the first paragraph my eyes fell upon was this—

"James Speaight, the infant violinist, died in this city late Saturday night. At the matinee of the Naiad Queen, on the afternoon of that day, when little James Speaight came off the stage, after giving his usual violin performance, Mr. Shewell noticed that he appeared fatigued, and asked if he felt ill. He replied that he had a pain in his heart, and then Mr. Shewell suggested that he remain away from the evening performance. He retired quite early, and about midnight his father heard him say, '*Gracious God, make room for another little child in heaven.*' No sound was heard after this, and his father spoke to him soon afterwards; he received no answer, but found his child dead."

The printed letters grew dim and melted into one another, as I tried to re-read them. I glanced across the table at Charley and Talbot eating their breakfast, with the slanted sunlight from the window turning their curls into real gold, and I had not the heart to tell them what had happened.

Of all the prayers that floated up to heaven, that Saturday night, from the bedsides of sorrowful men and women, or from the cots of innocent children, what accents could have fallen more piteously and tenderly upon the ear of a listening angel than the prayer of little

James Speaight! He knew he was dying. The faith he had learned, perhaps while running at his mother's side, in some green English lane, came to him then. He remembered it was Christ who said, "Suffer the little children to come unte me;" and the beautiful prayer rose to his lips, "Gracious God, make room for another little child in heaven."

I folded up the newspaper silently, and throughout the day I did not speak before the boys of the little violinist's death; but when the time came for our customary chat in the nursery, I told the story to Charley and Talbot. I do not think that they understood it very well, and still less did they understand why I lingered so much longer than usual by their bedside that Sunday night.

As I sat there in the dimly lighted room, it seemed to me that I could hear, in the pauses of the winter wind, faintly and doubtfully somewhere in the distance, the sound of the little violin.

Ah, that little violin!—a cherished relic now. Perhaps it plays soft, plaintive airs all by itself, in the place where it is kept, missing the touch of the baby fingers which used to waken it into life!

—Thomas Bailey Aldrich.